THE CONTINENTAL CLASSICS

VOLUME XIII

DEBIT AND CREDIT

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

GUSTAV FREYTAG

BY L. C. C.

WITH A PREFACE BY

CHRISTIAN CHARLES JOSIAS BUNSEN

D.D., D.C.L., D.PH.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

CHAPTER XXVII.

On a cold October day, two men were seen driving through the latticed gate of the town of Rosmin on toward the plain, which stretched out before them monotonous and boundless. Anton sat wrapped in his fur coat, his hat low on his forehead, and at his side was young Sturm, in an old cavalry cloak, with his soldier's cap cocked cheerily on one side. In front of them a farm-servant, squatted on a heap of straw, flogged on the small horses. The wind swept the sand and straw from the stubble-fields, the road was a broad causeway without ditches or hedges, the horses had to wade alternately through puddles and deep sand. Yellow sand gleamed through the scanty herbage in all directions wherever a field-mouse had made her way to her nest or an active mole had done what he could to diversify the unbroken plain. Wherever the ground sank, stagnant water lodged, and there hollow willow-trees stretched their crippled arms in the air, their boughs flapping in the wind, and their faded leaves fluttering down into the muddy pool below. Here and there stood a small dwarf pine, a resting-place for the crows, who, scared by the passing carriage, flew loudly croaking over the travelers' heads. There was no house to be seen on the road, no pedestrian, and no conveyance of any kind.

Karl looked every now and then at his silent companion, and said at last, pointing to the horses, "How rough their coats are, and how pretty their gray mouse skins! I wonder how many of these beasties would go to make up my sergeant's horse! When I took leave of my father, the old man said, 'Perhaps I shall pay you a visit, little one, when they light the Christmas-tree.' 'You'll never be able,' said I. 'Why not?' asked he. 'You'll never trust yourself in any post-chaise.' Then the old boy cried, 'Oho! post-chaises are always of a stout build; I shall be sure to trust myself in one.' But now, Mr. Anton, I see that my father never can pay us a visit."

"Why not?"

"It is possible that he may reach Rosmin; but, as soon as he sees these horses and this road, he will instantly turn back. 'Shall I trust myself,' he'll say, 'in a district where sand runs between one's legs like water, and where mice are put into harness? The ground is not firm enough for me.'"

"The horses are not the worst things here," said Anton, absently. "Look! these go fast enough."

"Yes," replied Karl, "but they don't go like regular horses; they entangle their legs like two cats playing in a parsley-bed. And what things they have for shoes—regular webbed hoofs, I declare, which no blacksmith can ever fit."

"If we could only get on!" returned Anton; "the wind blows cold, and I am shivering in spite of my fur."

"You have slept but little the last few nights, sir," said Karl. "The wind blows here as if over a threshing-floor. The earth is not round hereabouts as elsewhere, but flat as a cake. This is a complete desert; we have been driving for more than an hour, and there is not a village to be seen."

"A desert indeed," sighed Anton; "let us hope it may improve." They relapsed into profound silence. At length the driver stopped near a pool, unharnessed the horses, and led them to the water's edge, without noticing the travelers.

"What the deuce does this mean?" cried Karl, jumping down from the carriage.

"I am going to feed," replied the servant, sulkily, in a foreign accent.

"I am anxious to know how that will be done," said Karl. "There is not the shadow of a bag of provender."

The horses, however, soon proved that they could live without corn; they stretched down their shaggy heads, and began to pull the grass and weeds at the edge of the pool, sometimes taking a draught of the dirty water. Meanwhile the servant drew a bundle from under his seat, settled himself under the lee of an alder-bush, and, taking his knife, cut his bread and cheese without even glancing at the travelers.

"I say, Ignatius or Jacob," cried Karl, sharply, "how long will this breakfast of yours last?"

"An hour," replied the man, munching away.

"And how far is it from here to the estate?"

"Six miles, or maybe more."

"You can make nothing of him," said Anton; "we must put up with the customs of the country;" and, leaving the carriage, they went to look on at the horses feeding.

Anton is on his way to the Polish property. He is now the baron's agent. Anxious months have the last proved to him. The parting from his principal and the firm had been painful in the extreme. For some time before it, indeed, Anton had found himself alone in the midst of his colleagues. The quiet Baumann still remained his friend, but the others considered him a castaway. The merchant received his resignation with icy coldness; and even in the hour of parting, his hand lay impassive as metal in Anton's grasp. Since then, our hero had undertaken several journeys to the capital and to creditors in the family's behalf, and now he was on his way to set the new estate in order, accompanied by Karl, whom he had induced to become the baron's bailiff.

Ehrenthal had, by the authority conferred on him, taken possession of the property from the time of the sale by auction, and hired the Polish bailiff for the baron. There had been unfair dealings between them at the time, and it was well known in Rosmin that the bailiff had sold off a good deal, and been guilty of all sorts of frauds since, so that Anton had even now no prospect of a quiet life.

"The hour is come when I may execute my commission," cried Karl, groping in the straw under the seat. He drew out a large japanned tin case, and carried it to Anton. "Miss Sabine gave me this in charge for you." He then joyously opened the lid, produced the materials for an excellent breakfast, a bottle of wine, and a silver goblet. Anton took hold of the case.

"It has a very knowing look," said Karl. "Miss Sabine planned it herself."

Anton examined it on all sides, and placed it carefully on a tuft of grass; then he took up the goblet, and saw his initials engraved on it, and underneath the words, "To thy welfare." Whereupon he forgot the breakfast and all around him, and stood gazing at the goblet, lost in thought.

"Do not forget the breakfast, sir," suggested Karl, respectfully.

"Sit down by me, my faithful friend; eat and drink with me. Leave off your absurd politeness. We shall have but little, either of us, but what we have we will share like brothers. Take the bottle if you have no glass."

"There's nothing like leather," said Karl, taking a small leathern drinking-cup out of his pocket. "As for what you have just said, it was kindly meant, and I thank you; but

there must be subordination, if it were but for the sake of the others; and so, sir, be kind enough to let me shake hands with you now, and then let things be as they were before. Only look at the horses, Mr. Anton. My faith! the creatures devour thistles."

Again the horses were harnessed, again they threw out their short legs in the sand, and again the carriage rolled through the barren district—first through an empty plain, next through a wretched fir-wood, then past a row of low sand-hills, then over a tumble-down bridge crossing a small stream.

"This is the property," said the driver, turning round, and pointing with his whip to a row of dirty thatched roofs that had just come into sight.

Anton stood up to look for the group of trees in which the Hall might be supposed to stand. Nothing of the sort to be seen. The village was deficient in all that adorns the home of the poorest German peasant—no orchard, no hedged-in gardens, no lime-trees in the market-place.

"This is wretched," said he, sitting down again; "much worse than they told us in Rosmin."

"The village looks as if under a curse," cried Karl; "no teams working in the fields—not a cow or a sheep to be seen."

The farm-servant flogged his horses into an irregular gallop, and so they passed through the rows of mud huts which constituted the village, and arrived at the public house. Karl sprang from the carriage, opened the tavern door, and called for the landlord. A Jew slowly rose from his seat by the stove and came to the threshold. "Is the gendarme from Rosmin come?" He is gone into the village. "Which is the way to the farm-yard?"

The landlord, an elderly man with an intelligent countenance, described the way in German and Polish, and remained standing at the door—bewildered, Karl declared, by the sight of two human beings. The carriage turned into a cross-road, planted on both sides with thick bushes, the remains of a fallen avenue. Over holes, stones, and puddles, it rattled on to a group of mud huts, which still had a remnant of whitewash upon them. "The barns and stables are empty," cried Karl, "for I see gaps in the roofs large enough to drive our carriage through."

Anton said no more; he was prepared for every thing. They drove through a break between the stables into the farm-yard, a large irregular space, surrounded on three sides by tumble-

down buildings, and open to the fields on the fourth. A heap of *débris* lay there—lime and rotten timber, the remains of a ruined barn. The yard was empty; no trace of farm implements or human labor to be seen. "Which is the inspector's house," inquired Anton, in dismay. The driver looked round, and at last made up his mind that it was a small one-storied building, with straw thatch and dirty windows.

At the noise of the wheels a man appeared on the threshold, and waited phlegmatically till the travelers had dismounted, and were standing close before him. He was a broad-shouldered fellow, with a bloated, brandy-drinking face, dressed in a jacket of shaggy cloth, while behind him peered the muzzle of an equally shaggy dog, who snarled at the strangers. "Are you the steward of this property?"

"I am," replied the man, in broken German, without stirring from where he was.

"And I am the agent of the new proprietor," said Anton.

"That does not concern me," growled the shaggy man, turning sharp round, entering the house, and bolting the door within.

Anton was thoroughly roused. "Break the window in, and help me to catch the rascal," cried he to Karl, who coolly seized a piece of wood, struck the panes so as to make the rotten framework give way, and cleared the opening at one leap. Anton followed him. The room was empty, so was the next, and in it an open window—the man was gone.

"After him!" cried Karl, and dashed on in pursuit, while Anton looked about the house and out-buildings. He soon heard the barking of a dog, and saw Karl capture the fugitive. Hurrying to his help, he held the man fast, while, with a kick, Karl sent the dog flying. They then contrived to force the steward back to the house, though he kept striking out violently all the way.

"Go to the tavern, and bring the gendarme and the landlord," cried Anton to the driver, who, undisturbed by all that had been going on, had meanwhile unpacked the carriage. The man accordingly drove leisurely off, and the fugitive being got into the room, Karl found an old cloth, and with it bound his hands behind his back. "I beg your pardon, sir," said he; "it is only for an hour or so, till the arrival of the Rosmin gendarme, whom we have appointed to meet us."

Anton then proceeded to examine the house, but there was nothing to be found but the merest necessaries; no books nor

papers of any kind. It had doubtless been emptied already. A bundle projected from the coat-pocket of the prisoner, which turned out to be receipts and legal documents in Polish. In time, the driver returned with the landlord and the armed policeman. The landlord stood at the door in some perplexity, and the policeman explained in a few moments what remained to be done. "You must make a statement to the local judge, and give the man up to me. He shall go back in your carriage to Rosmin. You will do well to get rid of him, for this is a wild country, and it will be safer for you to have him at Rosmin than here, where he has friends and accomplices."

After a long search, a sheet of paper was found in a cupboard, the statement made and submitted to the policeman, who shook his head a little over the Polish composition, and the prisoner lifted into the carriage, the gendarme taking his seat beside him, and saying to Anton, "I have long expected something of the kind. You may have often occasion to want me again." The carriage then drove away, and thus the property came under Anton's administration. He felt as if cast on a desert island.

His portmanteau and traveling effects were leaning against a mud wall, and the Polish landlord was the only man who could give him and Karl any information or advice in their forlorn condition.

Now that the steward was fairly gone, the landlord grew more communicative, and showed himself serviceable and obliging. A long conversation ensued, and its purport was what Anton had apprehended from the warning given by the Commissary Walter and other Rosmin officials. The inspector had, during the last few weeks, done all he could in the way of spoliation, rendered daring by a report which had found its way from the town to the village, that the present proprietor would never be able to take possession of the estate. At last Anton said, "What that wretched man has done away with he will have to account for; our first care must be to preserve what is still to be found on the property. You must be our guide to-day."

They then examined the empty buildings. Four horses and two servants—they were gone into the wood—a few old plows, a pair of harrows, two wagons, a britzska, a cellar full of potatoes, a few bundles of hay, a little straw—the inventory did not take much time in drawing up. The buildings were all out of repair, not through age, but neglect.

"Where is the dwelling-house?" inquired Anton. The landlord led the way out of the yard to the meadow—a broad plain, gradually sloping down to the level of the brook. It had been a great pasture. The cattle had trodden it down into holes; the snouts of greedy swine had rooted it up; gray mole-hills and rank tufts of grass rose on all sides.

The landlord stretched out his hand. "There is the castle. This castle is famous throughout the whole country," he added, reverentially; "no nobleman in the district has a stone house like that. All the gentry here live in wood and mud buildings. Herr von Tarow, the richest of them, has but a poor dwelling."

About three hundred yards from the last out-building rose a great brick edifice, with a black slate roof and a thick round tower. Its gloomy walls on this treeless pasture-land, without one trace of life around, rose beneath the cloudy sky like a phantom fortress which some evil spirit had evoked from the abyss—a station from which to blight all the surrounding landscape.

The strangers approached it. The castle had fallen into ruins before the builders had finished their task. The tower had stood there for ages. It was built of unhewn stone, and had small windows and loop-holes. The former lords of the land had looked down from its summit on the tops of the trees, which then stretched far into the plain. They had then ruled with a rod of iron the serfs who cultivated their land, and toiled and died for them. Many an arrow had sped through those loop-holes at the enemy storming below, and many a Tartar horse had been overthrown before those massive walls. Years ago, a despot of the district had, in expiation of former sins, begun to add to the gray tower the walls of a holy monastery; but the monastery never got finished, and the useless walls had already stood there long, when the late count took it into his head to convert them into a lordly dwelling for his race, and to raise a house unparalleled for magnificence in the whole country.

The front of the house was added on to both sides of the tower, which projected in the middle. The intention had been to have a high terrace-road up to the castle, and the principal entrance had been made in the tower, and arched over; but the terrace never having been formed, the stone threshold of the main door was quite inaccessible without the help of ladders, and the wide opening was left. The window-spaces of

the lower floor were merely closed up with boards, while on the second story were some window-frames of beautifully carved wood, in which large panes had once been placed, but they had got broken. In other windows were temporary frames of rough deal, with small panes of muddy glass let into them. A company of jackdaws sat on the top of the tower, looking down in amazement on the strangers, and every now and then one flew off, screaming loudly, to contemplate the intruders from a new point of view.

"A house for crows and bats, not for human beings," said Anton. "At least, I see no way of getting into it."

The landlord now took them round the building. Behind, where the two wings made a sort of horse-shoe, there were low entrances to the cellars and offices; beneath which, again, were stables, great arched kitchens, and small cells for the serfs. A wooden staircase led to the upper story. The door turned creaking on its hinges, and a narrow passage took them through a side wing to the front part of the house. There all was at least magnificently planned. The circular entrance-hall—an arched room of the old tower—was painted in mosaic, and through the great doorway-opening was seen a wide expanse of country. A broad staircase, worthy of a palace, led up to another round hall, with narrow windows, the second story of the tower. On each side lay suites of apartments: large, lofty, desolate rooms, with heavy oak folding-doors, and dirty plastered walls, the ceiling made of fir branches arranged in squares; in some rooms colossal green tile stoves, in other rooms no stoves at all; in some, beautiful inlaid floors, in others rude deal boards. An immense saloon, with two gigantic chimney-pieces, had merely a provisional ceiling of old laths. The castle was fitted for a wild Asiatic household, for hangings of leather and of silk from France, for costly woodwork from England, for massive silver services from German mines, for a proud master, numerous guests, and a troop of retainers to fill the halls and ante-rooms. The builder of the castle had looked back to the wealth of his wild ancestors when he devised the plan; he had had hundreds of trees cut down in the woods, and his hereditary bondsmen had kneaded many thousand bricks with their own hands and feet; but Time, the inexorable, had raised his finger against him, and none of his hopes had been realized. His ruin first, and then his death, occurred during the progress of the building; and his son, brought up among strangers, had, as fast as one fool could,

hurried on the ruin of his house. Now the walls of the Slavonic castle stood with doors and windows gaping wide, but no guest spoke his good wishes as he entered; only wild birds flew in and out, and the marten crept over the floors. Useless and unsightly the walls stood there, threatening to crumble and fall, like the race that had raised them up.

Anton passed with rapid step from room to room, vainly hoping to find one in which he could even imagine the two ladies, who were looking forward to this house as their asylum. He opened door after door, went up and down creaking steps, disturbed the birds who had flown in through the open archway, and still clung to their last summer's nest; but he found nothing save uninhabitable rooms, with dirty plastered walls, or without any plaster at all. Every where draughts, gaping doors, and windows boarded up. Some oats had been shaken out in the large saloon; and a few rooms looked as if they might have been temporarily made use of, but a few old chairs and a rude table were all the furniture they contained.

At length Anton ascended the decayed staircase in the tower, and found himself on its summit. Thence he saw the whole pile of building below him, and looked far into the plain. To his left the sun sank down behind gray masses of cloud into the depths of the forest; to his right lay the irregular square of the farm-yard, and beyond it the untidy village; behind him ran the brook, with a strip of meadow-land on either side. Wild pear-trees, the delight of the Polish farmer, rose here and there in the fields, with their thick and branching crowns; and under each was an oasis of grass and bushes, gayly colored by the fallen leaves. These trees, the dwelling-places of countless birds, alone broke the monotonous surface of the plain—these, and at the verge of the horizon, on all sides, the dark forest mentioned above. The sky was gray, the ground colorless, the trees and bushes that bordered the brook were bare, and the forest, with its promontories and bays, looked like a wall that separated this spot of earth from the rest of humanity, from civilization, from every joy and charm of life.

Anton's heart sank. "Poor Lenore! poor family!" he groaned aloud; "things look terrible, but they could be improved. With money and taste every thing is possible. This house might, without prodigious expense, be metamorphosed by the upholsterer into a gorgeous residence. It would be easy to level the pasture-land around—to sow it with fine

grass—to intersperse it with a few gayly-colored flower-beds —and to plant out the village. Nothing is wanting to change the whole face of the district but capital, industry, and judgment. But how is the baron to procure these? To make any thing of this place should be the task of some fresh and active life, and the baron is broken down; and thousands of dollars would be needed, and years would pass away before the soil would do more than pay the expenses of its culture, or yield any interest whatever on the capital sunk in it."

Manwhile Karl was contemplating two particular rooms in the upper story with a knowing eye. "These take my fancy more than any of the others," said he to the landlord; "they have plastered walls, floors, stoves—nay, even windows. To be sure, the panes are a good deal broken, but, till we can get better glass, paper is not to be despised. We will settle ourselves here. Could you get me somebody who knows how to handle a broom and scrubbing-cloth? Good, you can; and now listen: try to bring me a few sheets of paper; I have got glue with me; we will first get some wood, then I will heat the stove, melt my glue, and paper up broken panes. But, above all, help me to carry up our luggage from the yard—and let us be quick about it."

His zeal communicated itself to the landlord; the luggage was got up stairs; Karl unpacked a case full of tools of every kind, and the host ran to call his maid from the public house.

Meanwhile horses' hoofs rang on the court-yard, and some well-dressed men stopped before the late steward's dwelling, and knocked loudly at the closed door. At a call from Anton, Karl hurried up to them.

"Good-morning," said one, in rather labored German; "is the steward at home?"

"Where is the steward? where is Bratzky?" cried the others, impatient as their prancing horses.

"If you mean the former steward," replied Karl, dryly, "he will not run away from you though you do not find him here."

"What do you mean?" inquired the nearest horseman; "I beg that you will explain yourself."

"If you wish to speak to Mr. Bratzky, you must take the trouble of riding to the town. He is in custody."

The horses reared, and their riders closed round Karl, while Polish ejaculations were heard on all sides. "In custody! On what account?"

"Ask my master," replied Karl, pointing to the doorway in the tower, where Anton stood.

"Have I the pleasure of speaking to the new proprietor?" inquired one of the party, taking off his hat. Anton looked down in amazement. The voice and face reminded him of a white-gloved gentleman whom he had met once before in a critical hour.

"I am the Baron Rothsattel's agent," replied he. The horse was pulled back, and the rider spoke a few words to his companions, upon which an older man with a fox-like face cried, "We are anxious to speak on private business with the late steward. We hear that he is in custody, and beg you will tell us why."

"He tried to evade by flight the surrender of the property to me, and he is suspected of dishonest dealings."

"Are his effects confiscated?" inquired one of the riders.

"Why do you inquire?" returned Anton.

"I beg your pardon," said the other, "but the man happens accidentally to have some papers that belong to me in his house, and it might embarrass me if I could not get possession of them."

"His effects are gone with him to town," replied Anton. Once more there was a consultation, and then the riders, bowing slightly, galloped off to the village, halted a few minutes at the public house, and disappeared where the high road turned into the wood.

"What can they want, Mr. Wohlfart?" inquired Karl. "That was a strange flying visit."

"Yes, indeed," replied Anton; "I have reason to think it remarkable. If I am not much mistaken, I have met one of the gentlemen before in very different circumstances. Perhaps that fellow Bratzky knew how to make himself friends through the mammon of unrighteousness."

The evening now wrapped castle and forest in its dark mantle. The servants returned with the horses from the wood. Karl led them into Anton's presence, made them a short Polish oration, and received them into the service of the new proprietor. Next came the landlord to look after them, bringing oats and a bundle of wood, and saying to Anton, "I recommend you, sir, to be watchful during the night; the peasants sit yonder in the bar, and discuss your arrival; there are bad men about, and I would not be sure that one of them might not stick a match into the straw yonder, and burn down the farm-buildings for you."

"I am sure enough that they will do nothing of the kind," said Karl, throwing another log into the stove. "A fresh breeze is blowing right on to the village. No one would be such a fool as to set his own barns on fire. We shall take care to keep the wind in this point as long as we are here. Tell your people that. Have you brought me the potatoes I asked for?"

Anton appointed the landlord to return the next morning, and the travelers were left alone in the desolate house.

"You need not heed that hint, Mr. Anton," continued Karl. "All over the world drunken rascals have a trick of threatening fire; and, after all, with reverence be it said, it would be no great harm. And now, Mr. Anton, that we are by ourselves, let us think as little as possible about this Polish affair—let us set to and be comfortable."

"I'm all right," said Anton, drawing a chair to the stove. The wood crackled in the green tiles, and the red glare threw a warm light over the floor, and flickered pleasantly on the walls.

"The warmth does one good," said Anton; "but do you not perceive smoke?"

"Of course," replied Karl, who was boring round holes in the potatoes by the firelight. "Even the best stoves will smoke at the beginning of winter, till they get accustomed to their work, and this great green fellow has probably not seen fire for a generation, so it is not to be expected that he should draw kindly at once. Be so good as to cut a bit of bread and hold it to the fire. I am getting our candles ready." He took out a great packet of candles, stuck one into each potato, cut off the lower half, and placed them on the table, and then produced the japanned case. "This is inexhaustible," said he; "it will last till the day after to-morrow."

"That it will," said Anton, cheerily. "I am wonderfully hungry. And now let us consider how we shall manage our housekeeping. What we absolutely want we must get from the town; I will make a list at once. We will put out one candle, though—we must be economical."

The evening was spent in plans. Karl discovered that he could make part of the necessary furniture out of the boxes and boards about, and the laughter of the two companions sounded cheerfully through the rooms of the starost's dwelling. At last Anton proposed that they should go to bed. They shook down straw and hay, unbuckled their portman-

teaus, and produced some blankets and coverlets. Karl fastened a lock that he had brought with him into the room door, examined the loading of his carbine, took up his potato, and said, with a military salute, "At what time does major general the agent wish to be called to-morrow?"

"You good fellow!" cried Anton, reaching out his hand from his straw bed.

Karl went into the next room, which he had chosen for himself. Soon both candles were extinguished—the first signs of life which had shone for years in the forsaken dwelling. But in the stove the little Kobolds of the castle lingered long over the newly-kindled fire; they hovered in the smoke wreaths, they knocked at doors and windows in amazement at the proceedings of the strangers. At length they assembled in a corner of the old tower, and began to dispute as to whether or not the flames lighted this evening would continue to burn, and to cast henceforth their cheerful glow on meadow, fields, and woods; and as they doubted whether the new order of things had strength enough to endure, the smoke drove the bats from their home in the chimney, and they came flapping down stupefied on the summit of the tower, while the owls in its crevices shook their round heads and hooted in the new era.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He who has always trodden life's macadamized ways, hedged in by law, moulded by order, custom, form, handed down from generation to generation habits a thousand years old, and who finds himself suddenly thrown among strangers, where law can but imperfectly protect him, and where he must assert by daily struggles his right to exist—such a one realizes for the first time the full blessing of the holy circle woven round each individual by his fellow-men, his family, his companions in labor, his race, his country. Whether he lose or gain in foreign parts, he must needs change. If he is a weakling, he will sacrifice his own *manière d'être* to the external influences around him; if he has the making of a man in him, he will become one now. The possessions, perhaps the prejudices, that he has grown up with, will wax dearer to him than ever; and much that once he looked upon as things of course, like air and sunshine, will become his most prized treas-

ures. It is in foreign countries that we first enjoy the dialect of home, and in absence that we learn how dear to us is our fatherland.

Our Anton had now to find out what he possessed and what he wanted.

The following morning they proceeded to view the entire property. It consisted of the mansion-house, with the lands and buildings adjacent, and of three farms. About half the land was arable, a small part laid down in meadow; about half was wood, bordered with barren sand. The castle and the village lay about the middle of the great clearing; two of the farms were at opposite points of the compass, east and west, and both were hid by projections of the forest. The third farm lay toward the south, and was entirely divided by a wood from the rest of the estate. It joined on to another Polish village, had its own farm-buildings, and had always been separately cultivated. It occupied about a quarter of the plain, had a distillery on it, and had been rented for many years by a brandy-merchant, well to do. His lease had been extended by Ehrenthal, but the sum he paid was low. However, his occupancy was at present a good thing for the property, as it insured some return for one portion of it, at least. The devastated wood was under the care of a forester.

The first walk through the portion adjacent to the castle was as little cheering as possible: the fields were, generally speaking, not prepared for winter-sowing; and wherever the marks of the plow appeared, the land had been taken possession of by the villagers, who regarded the neglected property as their perquisite, and looked morosely at the foreign settlers.

For years they had done none of the work that their feudal tenure required of them, and the village bailiff plainly told Anton that the community would resent any return to old customs. He pretended he did not understand a word of German, and even Karl's eloquence failed to conciliate him. The soil itself, neglected and weedy as it was, turned out generally better than Anton had expected, and the landlord boasted of his crops; but in the vicinity of the wood it was very poor, and in many places quite unfit for culture.

"This is a serious sort of day," said Anton, putting up his pocket-book. "Harness the britzska; we will drive to see the cattle."

The farm where the cattle were quartered lay to the west, about a mile and a half from the castle. A miserable stable

and the cottage of a farm-servant was all they found there. The cows and a pair of draught oxen were under his charge, and he lived there with his wife and a half-witted herdsman. None of these people understood much German, or inspired any confidence: the wife was a dirty woman, without shoes and stockings, whose milk-pails looked as if long unwashed. The farm-servant, and sometimes the herdsman, plowed with the yoke of oxen wherever they chose; the cattle fed on the meadow land.

"Here is work for you," said Anton; "examine the cattle, and see what you can find of winter provender. I will make an inventory of the building and implements."

Karl soon came to report. "Four-and-twenty milch cows, twelve heifers, and an old bull; about a dozen cows, at most, are in profit, the rest mere grass-devourers: the whole of them are a poor set. Some foreign cows, probably Swiss ones, have been brought over and crossed with a much larger breed, and the result is ugly enough. The best cows have evidently been exchanged; for some wretched creatures are running about, the rest keeping aloof from them: they can't have been here long. As to fodder, there is hay enough for winter, and a few bundles of oat straw; no wheat straw at all."

"The buildings are out of order too," cried Anton, in return. "Drive now to the distillery. I have carefully examined the conditions of the lease, and am better up in it than in most things."

The carriage rolled over a shaky bridge that spanned the brook, then through fields and an expanse of sand scantily covered with arenaceous plants, in whose roots a pine-seed had nestled here and there, stretching dwarf branches over the waste; then came the woods, with many a gap, where lay nothing but yellow sand, and on all sides stumps overgrown with heath and brambles. Slowly the horses waded on. Neither of the strangers spoke, as both were engaged in observing every tree that a fortunate chance had allowed to grow and spread better than the rest.

At length the prospect widened, and another plain lay before them, monotonous and forest-bounded like the rest. Before them rose a church. They drove past a wooden crucifix, and stopped at the court-yard of the farm. The tenant had already heard of their arrival; and perhaps he was better acquainted with the baron's circumstances than Anton could have wished, for he received them in a patronizing and self-

sufficient manner, hardly taking the trouble to lead them into an unoccupied room. His first question was, "Do you really believe that Rothsattel will be able to take possession of the estate? There is much to be done on it, and, from all I hear, the poor man has not got the capital required."

This cool demeanor exasperated Anton not a little; but he answered, with the composure that habits of business give, "If you wish to ask me whether the Baron Rothsattel will undertake the management of the estate, I have to say in reply that he will be all the better able to do so the more conscientiously his tenants and dependents perform their duties. I am here at present to ascertain how far you have done this. I have authority given me, by the terms of your lease, to examine your inventory. And if you value the baron's good-will, I recommend you to treat his representative more civilly."

"The baron's good-will is perfectly immaterial to me," said the inflated tenant. "But, since you speak of authority, perhaps you will show me your credentials."

"Here they are," said Anton, quietly drawing the document in question from his pocket.

The tenant read it carefully through, or at least pretended to do so, and rudely replied, "I am not very sure, after all, whether you have a right to look over my premises, but I have no objection to it; so go and inspect as much as you like." And, putting on his cap, he turned to leave the room, but Anton at once barred the way, and said, in his quiet, business voice, "I give you the choice of conducting me over your premises at once, or having an inventory drawn out by a lawyer. This last measure will occasion you unnecessary expense. I would besides remind you that the good-will of the proprietor is necessary to every tenant who wishes for an extension of his lease, and that yours will be out in two years' time. It is no pleasure to me to spend two hours in your society; but if you do not fulfill your contract, the baron will of course take advantage of it to break your lease. I give you your choice."

The tenant looked for a few minutes with a stupefied expression at Anton's resolute countenance, and at last said, "If you insist upon it, of course. I did not mean to offend." He then reluctantly touched his hat, and led the way into the court-yard.

Anton took out his tablets once more, and the survey began. 1. Dwelling-house: the roof out of order. 2. Cow-

house: one side of the lower wall fallen; and so on. The survey was, on the whole, unsatisfactory; but Anton's business-like demeanor and Karl's martial aspect were not without their influence over the tenant, who gradually relaxed, and muttered out a few excuses.

When Anton got into the carriage again, he said to him, "I give you four weeks to rectify what we have found amiss, and at the end of that time I shall call again."

To which Karl added, "Will you have the kindness to raise your hat as you now see me do? This is the right moment for the ceremony. That's it! You will learn the proper thing in time. Drive on, coachman."

"When you return," continued Karl to Anton, "this man will be as obsequious as possible. He has grown bumptious on the farm."

"And the estate has grown the poorer because of him," said Anton. "Now, then, for the new farm!"

A poor dwelling-house on one side, a long row of sheep-pens on the other, a stable, and a barn.

"It is remarkable," said Karl, looking at the buildings from a distance, "the thatch has no holes, and in the corner there is a stack of new straw. By Jove! they have mended the roof."

"Here is our last hope," replied Anton.

As the carriage drew up, the heads of a young woman and a flaxen-haired child appeared for a moment at the window, then rapidly retreated.

"This farm is the jewel of the estate," cried Karl, jumping over the side of the carriage. "There are actually signs of a dunghill here; and there go a cock and hens—something like a cock too, with a tail like a sickle! And there is a myrtle in the window. Hurra! here is a housewife! here is the fatherland! here are Germans!"

The woman came out—a neat figure—followed by the curly pate, who, at the sight of strangers, put his fingers in his mouth, and crept behind his mother's apron.

Anton inquired for her husband.

"He can see your carriage from the field; he will be here immediately," said the wife, blushing. She invited them in, and hastily rubbed two chairs bright with her apron.

The room was small, but whitewashed; the furniture painted red, but kept very clean; the coffee-pot was simmering on the stove; a Black-forest clock ticked in the corner; on some

hanging shelves stood two painted China figures, a few cups, and about a dozen books; and behind the little looking-glass on the wall there was a fly-flap, and a birch rod carefully bound round with red ribbon. It was the first comfortable room that they had seen on the estate.

"A song-book and a rod," said Anton, good-naturedly. "I do believe you are a good woman. Come here, flaxen-hair." He took the scared, stolid child on his knee, and made him ride there—walk—trot—gallop—till the little fellow at last got courage to take his fingers out of his mouth.

"He is used to that," said his mother, much pleased. "It is just what his father does when he is a good boy."

"You have had a hard time of it here," suggested Anton.

"Ah! sir," cried she, "when we heard that a German family had bought the estate, and that we had to keep things together for them, and thought they would soon come and perhaps drive over here, we were as glad as children. My husband was all day just like one who has been in the public house, and I wept for joy. We thought that at last there would be some order, and we should know what we were working for. My husband spoke seriously to the shepherd—he is from our part of the country—and they both resolved that they would not allow the steward to sell any more away. And so my husband told him. But weeks passed, and no one came. We sent every day to the village to inquire, and my husband went to Rosmin and saw the lawyer. But it seemed they were not coming after all, and that the estate would be sold again. Then, a fortnight ago, the steward came over with a strange butcher, and wanted my husband to give him the wethers; but he refused. At that they threatened him, and wanted to force their way into the sheep-pens; but the shepherd and my husband were too much for them; so off they went cursing, and declaring they would have the sheep yet. Since then a man has watched every night; there hangs a loaded gun which we have borrowed; and when the shepherd's dog barks, I get up, and am dreadfully frightened about my husband and child. There are dangerous men about here, sir, and that you will find."

"I hope things will improve," said Anton; "you lead a solitary life here."

"It is solitary indeed," said the woman, "for we hardly ever go to the village, and only sometimes on Sunday to the German village, where we go to church. But there is always

something to be done about the house; and," continued she, somewhat embarrassed, "I will just tell you all, and if you don't approve, we can give it up. I have dug a little space behind the barn, we have hedged it in, and made a garden of it, where I grow what I want for cooking; and then," with increased embarrassment, "there are the poultry and a dozen ducks; and if you won't be angry, the geese on the stubble-fields, and," wiping her eyes with her apron, "there is the cow and the calf."

"Our calf!" cried the child, in ecstasy, slapping Anton's knees with his fat hands.

"If you do not approve of my having kept the cow for myself," continued the weeping woman, "we will give it up. My husband and the shepherd have had no wages since the last wool-shearing, and we have been obliged to buy necessaries; but my husband has kept an account of every thing, and he will show it you, that you may see that we are not dishonest people."

"I hope it will so appear," replied Anton, soothingly; "and now let us have a look at your garden; you shall keep it, if possible."

"There is not much in it," said the woman, leading them to the inclosed space where the beds were all prepared for their winter's rest. She stooped down, and gathered the few flowers remaining, some asters, and her especial pride, some autumn violets. Tying them together, she gave the nosegay to Anton, "because," said she with a pleasant smile, "you are a German."

A quick step was now heard in the yard, and in came the tenant with reddened cheeks, and made his bow to them.

He was a fine young man, with a sensible countenance and a trustworthy manner. Anton spoke encouragingly, and he readily produced his accounts.

"We will look over the stock now," replied Anton; "the books I will take with me. Come to me to-morrow at the castle, and we can arrange the rest."

"The horses are in the fields," said the tenant; "I drive one plow myself, and the shepherd's lad helps with the other. We have only four horses here; once there were twelve in the stable. We have of late cultivated little more than was necessary for ourselves and the cattle. There is a want of every thing."

However, the survey turned out cheering on the whole;

the buildings were in tolerable repair, and the crops lately got in promised to keep the flocks through the winter. Last of all, the farmer, with a pleased smile, opened a door in his dwelling-house, and pointed out a heap of pease. "You have seen the straw and hay already," he said, "but here are the pease which I hid from the steward, thinking they belonged to you. Indeed, there was some selfishness in it," continued he, candidly, "for we were so placed that we got nothing, and I was obliged to think of some way of keeping the farm going in case the winter brought no help."

"Very good," said Anton, smiling; "I hope we shall understand each other well. And now to the sheep. Come with us, farmer."

The carriage rolled slowly along the fields, the tenant eagerly pointing out their condition. Not the fourth part of the land belonging to the farm was plowed; the rest had been in pasture for many years past.

As they approached the flocks, the only living creatures of any worth on the estate, Karl impatiently jumped out.

The shepherd slowly came to meet the strangers, accompanied by his two dogs, one an old experienced character, who walked at the same pace as his master, and looked with as much intelligence and discrimination at the new authorities; the other a young fellow, a pupil, who vainly attempted to maintain the aspect of calm dignity becoming his responsible calling, but kept running with youthful eagerness ahead of his master, and barking at the strangers, till a growl of rebuke from his wiser companion brought him back to propriety. The shepherd took off his broad-brimmed hat with all civility, and waited to be addressed. As a man of intuition and reflection, he perfectly knew who he saw before him, but it would have ill become one whose whole life had been spent in restraining precipitation on the part of sheep and dogs to have evinced undue curiosity.

The farmer introduced the strangers to him with a circular movement of his hand, and the shepherd made several bows in succession, to show that he perfectly understood who they were. "A fine flock, shepherd," said Anton.

"Five hundred and five-and-twenty head," replied the shepherd. "Eighty-six of them lambs, forty fat wethers." He looked round the flock for a sheep, who deserved to be presented as a specimen, and suddenly stooping, caught up one by the hind legs, and exhibited the wool. Karl was intent in

the examination. They were great strong sheep, well fitted for the country, and far exceeded, both in condition and wool, what might have been looked for. "If they get plenty of food, they give wool," said the shepherd, proudly. "It is first-rate wool."

A yearling was at that moment thoughtless enough to cough. The shepherd looked disapprovingly at it, and said, "The whole flock is perfectly healthy."

"How long have you been in service here?" inquired Anton.

"Nine years," was the reply. "When I came, the creatures were like the poodles in town, all bare behind. It has taken trouble to bring them round. No one else has ever seen after them, but they have not fared the worse for that. If I could only always have had pea-straw for them, and this winter, common pease for the mothers."

"We must see what can be done," said Anton; "but we shall have to be sparing in our management this winter."

"True," said the shepherd; "but, however, this is good pasture."

"I can well believe," said Anton, smiling, "that your sheep have nothing to complain of. There are few fields here which your dog has not barked over for years. I have been delighted to hear how bravely you have defended the property of your new master. Have the people about often behaved ill to you?"

"I can hardly say, sir," replied the shepherd; "men are every where alike—they are not to be depended on. I would rather bring up a colly than a man." He leaned upon his staff, and looked with satisfaction upon his dog, who, true to his post, had been barking round the flock, and now came back to give his master's legs a confidential flap with his tail. "Look at this dog! When I have had a dog in training for two years, he is either good or not. If not, I send him away, and have done with him; if good, I can trust him as I do myself, so long as he lives. That boy yonder with the wethers I have had three years with me, and I can never tell the hour that some confounded freak or other may not come into his head, or that, instead of driving my sheep to the right, he may not run off to the left. That's why I say there's not much reliance to be placed upon men."

"And on whom do you rely in this world?" asked Anton.

"First of all on myself, for I know myself; then on my dog Crambo, for I know him too, and, besides, I trust as I

ought." He looked up for a moment, then gave a low whistle, and Crambo again set out on his rounds. "And you, sir," continued the shepherd, "shall you remain with the baron?"

"I think so."

"May I ask as what? You are neither steward nor bailiff, for you have not yet looked at the wethers. The wethers should be sold; it's high time for it. So may I ask what you are to the new landlord?"

"If you want a name, you may call me his accountant."

"Accountant," said the shepherd, thoughtfully; "then I am to discuss my allowance with you."

"You shall do so the next time we meet."

"There is no hurry," said the shepherd; "but one likes to know how one stands. There is a pane broken in my room; the glazier will be coming to the castle, and I hope, Mr. Accountant, you will remember me."

Karl and the farmer now joined them. "To the forester's!" cried Anton to the driver.

"You mean to go to the forester's?" inquired the farmer.

"To the forester's!" repeated the shepherd, drawing nearer.

"Why does that surprise you?" inquired Anton from the carriage.

"Only," stammered out the farmer, "because the forester is a strange man. If the baron himself were to come, he would not surrender."

"Does he live in a fortress, then?" inquired Anton, laughing.

"He locks himself up," said the tenant, "and lets no one enter; he has a way of his own."

"He is a wild man of the woods," said the shepherd, shaking his head.

"The Poles say that he is a magician," continued the farmer.

"He can make himself invisible," cried the shepherd.

"Do you believe that?" asked Karl, much amazed.

"Not I, but there are plenty in the village who do."

"He is a good sort of man at the bottom, but he has his oddities," affirmed the farmer.

"I hope he will respect my position," rejoined Anton; "it will be worse for him if he does not."

"It would be better that I should speak to the forester first," suggested the tenant. "Will you allow me to drive thither with you? He is on friendly terms with me."

"With all my heart; take the reins, and we will leave the servant to manage the plow till we set you down again on our way back. And now then for this dangerous character."

The carriage turned into a road bordered with young firs, and leading into the wood. The ground was again sandy, and the trees poor. They went on over stones and stumps till at length the wood stopped altogether at a plantation apparently about fifteen years old: here the tenant fastened the reins round the trunk of a tree, and begged the gentlemen to dismount. They walked on through a thicket of young trees, whose long spikes brushed their clothes as they passed, and filled the air with a strong resinous perfume. Beyond this the ground sank, green moss spread a soft carpet round, and a group of giant pines reared their dark crowns high in the air: there stood the forester's house, a low wooden building surrounded by a strong wooden fence, and further guarded by a triple hedge of young fir-trees. A little spring trickled under the fence, and gurgled among a few large stones, overshadowed by giant ferns.

Altogether it was a picture that could not fail to please in this district of sand and heath. No one was to be seen about, and there was not a trace of a footstep on the moss: it was only the barking of a dog from within that announced the dwelling to be inhabited. They went round the hedge till they came to a narrow door, which was firmly bolted.

"His bull-finch sits above the window," said the tenant; "he is at home."

"Call him, then," desired Anton.

"He knows already that we are here," replied the man, pointing to a row of small openings in the hedge; "look at his peep-holes. He is watching us; but this is always his way. I must give him a signal, or he will never open." Accordingly, he put two fingers in his mouth, and whistled three times, but there was no reply. "He is a cunning fellow," said the tenant, perplexed, whistling again so shrilly that the dog's bark changed into a howl, and the bull-finch began to flap his wings.

At last a rough voice sounded on the other side of the fence. "Who the deuce are you bringing with you?"

"Open, forester," cried the tenant; "the new gentry are come."

"Go to the devil with your gentry; I am sick of the whole race."

The tenant looked in perplexity toward Anton. "Open the

door," said the latter, authoritatively; "it will be better for you to do of your own accord what I can force you to do."

"Force!" said the voice. "How will you manage that, pray?" The double barrel of a gun now made its appearance through a hole in the door, turning conveniently to one side, then the other.

"Your gun will not help you," was the reply; "we have that on our side which will henceforth be stronger in this forest than brute force, and that is law and our right."

"Indeed!" asked the voice. "And who, then, are you?"

"I am the agent of the new proprietor, and command you to open the door."

"Is your name Moses or Levi?" inquired the voice. "I will have nothing to do with an agent. Whoever comes to me as an agent, I set down for a rogue."

"A plague upon your hard head," cried Karl, in a towering passion. "How dare you speak so disrespectfully of my master, you crazy Jackboots you!"

"Jackboots!" said the voice. "I like that; that sounds more like fair dealing than any thing I have heard for a long time." The bolts were shot back, and the forester appeared at the door, which he shut behind him. He was a short, broad-set man, with grizzled hair, and a long gray beard, which hung down on his breast; a pair of keen eyes shone out of his furrowed face; he wore a thick shaggy coat, out of which sun and rain had expelled every trace of color, carried his double-barreled gun in his hand, and looked defiance at the strangers. "Who is bullying here?" said he.

"I am," answered Karl, stepping forward; "and you shall get something besides hard words if you continue in your insubordination."

"What sort of a cap is that you wear?" asked the old man, looking hard at him.

"Have you grown into a mere fungus here in your wood that you do not know it?" replied Karl, settling his soldier's cap more firmly on his head.

"Hussar?" asked the forester.

"Invalid," was the reply.

The old man pointed to a small strip of ribbon on his coat. "Militia," said he; "1813 and 1814."

Karl made a military salute. "All honor to you, old boy; but you are a rough one, notwithstanding."

"Well, you are not much like an invalid," said the forester;

"you look wild enough, and know how to rap out an oath. So you are neither tradesman nor steward?" said he, turning to Anton.

"Now do behave like a sensible man," said the farmer. "This gentleman has been empowered to take possession of the estate, and to manage every thing till the family come. You will get yourself into sad trouble with your obstinate ways."

"Indeed!" said the forester. "Don't be anxious about me; I shall manage well enough. So you are an agent, are you?" said he, turning to Anton. "Of late years I have had enough of agents; and I'll tell you what," he went on, coming a few steps nearer, "you'll find neither books nor accounts with me. This is the state of things: For five years I, as the forester in charge of this wood, have been quarreling with agents. Each agent has put ever so much timber into his pocket, and at last the villagers have come from all the country round and carried off whatever they liked, and when I held my gun under their nose, they thrust a rascally bit of paper under mine, in which, forsooth, they had got leave from the agent. I had nothing more to say, and so I have just taken care of myself. There is but little game, but what I have shot I have eaten, and have sold the skins—for one must live. It's five years since I have touched a farthing of salary—I have paid myself. Every year I have taken fifteen of these trees. As far as to the clearing yonder, the wood is ninety years old. I reckon that they will last me about three winters longer. When the last is felled, I will shoot my dog, and choose out a quiet spot in the forest for myself." He looked down darkly at his gun. "I have lived here thirty years; I have buried my wife and my children in the German church-yard, and I don't trouble myself about what is to befall me now. So far as my dog's bark can be heard and my gun reach, the wood is in order; the rest belonged to the agent. That is my reckoning, and now you may do what you like with me;" and, much excited, he stamped the butt-end of his gun on the ground.

"I shall reply to what I have just heard," said Anton, "in the house and room which henceforth belongs to your master, the Baron Rothsattel." He stepped up to the door and laid his hands on its wooden bolt. "I take possession of this in the name of the new proprietor." Then opening it, he beckoned to the forester: "Keep back your dogs, and lead us in as you ought."

The old man made no opposition, but slowly preceded them, called down his dogs, and opened the house door.

Anton entered with his companions. "And now, forester, that you have opened the house," said he, "we will proceed to an arrangement at once. What has hitherto been done here by you can not be altered, and shall not be discussed; but from this day forth you will receive your regular allowance, and matters must be put on a different footing. I now place the forest, and all that belongs to the forest department, under your charge. Your duty now is to stand up for your master's rights, and from this time forward I make you responsible for them. I shall protect you as far as I can, and shall claim for you the protection of the law. We shall be severe in prosecuting all who damage this wood any further. This estate shall be better managed henceforth, and your new master expects that you will help him to do so, as a faithful and obedient man should. And there must be an end of this wild life of yours in the bush; we are fellow-countrymen, you know. You will come regularly to the castle and report the state of things, and we will take care that you shall not feel desolate in your old days. If you purpose honestly to fulfill the requirements I have just been making, give me your hand on it."

The forester had stood abashed, listening, cap off, to Anton's address, and he now took the hand offered to him, and said, "I do."

"With this shake of the hand, then," continued Anton, "I take you into the service of the present proprietor."

The forester held Anton's hand in both his, and at length exclaimed, "If I live to see things improve on the estate, I shall rejoice. I will do all I can, but I tell you beforehand we shall have a hard fight for it. Owing to the agents and the rascally management, the people on the estate are become a pack of robbers, and I am afraid that my old gun will often be obliged to have the last word of the argument."

"We will neither do wrong nor suffer wrong, and we must take the consequences," was the earnest reply. "And now, forester, show us your house, and then accompany us into the wood."

Anton then went over the little building: it was entirely of rough wood. The light fell dimly through the small windows, and the brown walls and blackened beams increased the darkness, and gave the room a mysterious aspect. It was difficult at first to distinguish the objects on the walls· antlers, dogs'

collars, huntsmen's horns, whips, and stuffed birds. On the stove stood a small press with cooking apparatus.

"I cook for myself," said the forester, "and get what I want from the public house."

There were several bird-cages in the windows, and a constant trilling and chirping going on within them. Near the stove sat a raven, whose rough plumage, and the white feathers about his beak and wings, proved his great age. He had drawn his head in between his shoulders, and seemed self-absorbed, but in reality his bright eye was observing every movement of the strangers.

Next came the bed-room, where several guns were hanging. A grating before the window proved that this was the citadel of the house.

"Where does that door lead to?" asked Anton, pointing to a trap-door in the floor.

"To a cellar," replied the forester, with some embarrassment.

"Is it arched?"

"I will take you down, if you will come alone."

"Wait for us," cried Anton to his companions in the room.

The forester lit a lantern, carefully bolted the door, and went first with the light.

"I had not thought," said he, "that any eyes but mine would see my secret in my lifetime."

A few steps led them into a narrow vault, one side of which had been broken through, and a low subterranean passage made, supported by stems of trees triangularly placed.

"That is my run," said the forester, holding the candle down, "and it leads into the young wood. It is more than forty yards long, and I was a great while excavating it. This is the way I creep in and out unobserved; and I may thank it that I am here still, for this is why the stupid villagers believe me a sorcerer. When they have watched me go into the house, and think they may steal in safely, I suddenly appear among them. Two years ago a band of them broke into my house, and it would have been all up with me but that I slunk out here like a badger. Do not betray to any one what I have just shown you."

Anton promised that he would not, and they went back into the little inclosure, where they found Karl occupied in fastening, between four blocks that he had driven into the ground, the wooden trough of a young fox. The fox, insen-

sible to this delicate attention on the part of the hussar, snarled at him, rattled his chain, and tried all it could, under the board that Karl had placed across its kennel, to get at his hands.

"Do you want to kiss my hands, little red-head?" cried Karl, hammering away. "You are a pretty fellow! What a pair of soft truthful eyes you have, to be sure! Now, there, it's done; jump backward and forward as much as you like. He does what's told him, forester; a good-natured beast—something of your own character, comrade."

The forester laughed. "Do you know how to set about trapping a fox?"

"I should think so," said Karl.

"There are plenty more such fellows here," continued the old man; "if you like, we will go after them next Sunday."

And so they went together through the wood, all on the best terms possible. Anton called the forester to his side, and got much information from him. Certainly, he had nothing very cheering to tell. Of wood fit for cutting there was hardly enough for the use of the family and tenants. The old system of plunder had done its worst here. As they reached the carriage, the forester respectfully touched his hat, and asked at what hour in the morning he should come to the castle.

Anton rejoiced to have succeeded so well in concealing the feeling of insecurity which made his present position an irksome one to him.

"You see," said he to his faithful ally, as they both sat over the green tile stove at evening, "what disturbs me most is that I feel more ignorant and helpless than any of the servants about, and yet I have got to maintain their respect. These two last days have taught me how little mere good-will can do. Now, then, give me some sensible advice. What shall be our next step?"

"First sell off all the cattle that are out of profit, and instantly dismiss the good for nothing people who have them in charge. Bring cattle and horses to the farm-yard, that we may have them under our own eyes. What can be done in farming with our small means shall be done regularly, not hurried over. We must buy straw and oats for the present. Till next year, when a regular bailiff will be wanted, give me the charge of things; I shall not do much, to be sure, but more than any of your other people."

It was already late, when a quick step was heard on the

stairs. With a great stable-lantern in his hand, and a face full of bad news, the landlord made his appearance in Anton's room. "I wished to tell you, sir, what I have heard. A German from Kunau, who has just passed through, has brought word that Bratzky never got to Rosmin yesterday."

"Never got there!" cried Anton, springing up.

"About two miles from Rosmin, in the wood, four riders fell upon the carriage. It was dark; the riders overpowered the gendarme and bound him, took off Bratzky and all his things, mounted him on one of the horses, and off with him into the bush. Two of them remained with the carriage, and obliged the driver to turn out of the road into a thicket, and there they staid two whole hours, holding their loaded pistols at the gendarme and the driver all the time. The driver said the horses were gentlemen's horses, and that the riders spoke like gentry. The gendarme was bruised, but otherwise unhurt, and they took your paper away from him."

Anton and Karl looked at each other significantly, and thought of the party of the day before.

"Where is the man who has brought the news?" asked Anton, snatching up his hat.

"He was in a hurry to get on before dark. To-morrow we shall hear more. Such a thing has not happened for years as mounted men falling upon a carriage with a gendarme in it. When a robbery has been committed, it has always been on foot."

"Did you know the riders who were in the village yesterday afternoon, and who were calling for the steward?" inquired Anton.

The host cast a sly glance at him, and seemed reluctant to answer.

"Nay," continued Anton, "you must have known them all; they belonged to this part of the country."

"Why should not I know them?" replied the landlord, in some perturbation. "It was the rich Herr von Tarow himself with his guests. A powerful man, Mr. Wohlfart, who has the command of the police on your property too. And as to what he wanted with Bratzky? Bratzky, as inspector, has had to do with the police, and has often been employed by the gentry in buying and selling horses, and in other ways too. If the head of the police wanted to speak to the inspector, why should not he? The Von Tarows are a clever set, who know what they are about in speaking and acting." So far the

landlord, with much fluency, but his eyes and the expression of his countenance told a very different tale.

"You have a suspicion," cried Anton, looking fixedly at him.

"God preserve me from all suspicion!" continued the landlord, horrified at the idea. "And Mr. Wohlfart, if you will allow me to tell you my opinion, why should you go and suspect any one either? You will have enough to do on the property here, and will need the gentry round in many ways. Why should you make enemies for no purpose? This is a country where the gentlemen ride in parties, and then divide, put their heads together, and then start off in different directions. He is wisest who does not trouble himself about them."

When the landlord was gone, Anton said gloomily to Karl, "I am afraid that, besides our trouble with the property, much of a different nature is going on around us, which all our skill will not be able to set right."

This singular circumstance set the whole country in a ferment. Anton was often summoned to Rosmin in the course of the next few weeks, but his depositions led to no result, the authorities not succeeding in discovering the offenders, or in getting hold of the abducted steward.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Our two colonists spent the next few weeks in such active pursuits, that every night, when they threw themselves upon their beds, they were quite exhausted.

Karl had been duly installed as bailiff, and held the reins of management with a firm hand, and Anton had committed the care of the house and kitchen to a hard-working woman, whom he found in one of the German settlements around. The most difficult matter had been to establish tolerably satisfactory relations with the adjacent village; but Anton's calm decision had at all events prevented any outbreak of opposition. One of his first measures had been to appeal, in all cases of breach of trust or dereliction of duty, to the proper authorities. Karl's cavalry cloak attracted a few men who had served; and through these, the most civilized part of the community, the settlers gained some influence over others. At length, several voluntarily offered to become servants at the castle, or day-laborers on the estate.

Anton had written to the baroness, not disguising from her the state of the property, nor the unfriendly feeling of the district, and his own anxiety about the family moving thither in the course of the next winter. He had asked whether she would not prefer to remain till spring in the capital. In reply, he received a letter from Lenore, in which she told him, on the part of her parents, that they abode by their former resolve to leave the town, which had now become a painful residence to them all. She therefore begged him to have the castle put into a habitable condition as soon as possible.

Anton called out to his ally, "They are actually coming."

"They are, are they?" said Karl. "It is fortunate that we have heard of workmen — masons, joiners, locksmiths, glaziers, potters, and so on. If you will allow me, I will at once send a messenger off to Rosmin. If I could only get off this ugly brown paint from the door—it hides the beautiful oak carving. But ley won't stir it. And then how many stoves shall we want?"

An important conversation now began. "We must leave the whole lower floor unoccupied," Anton said, "closing up the windows with thick boards; but we shall have to put up a strong door in the hall, because one is constantly passing through it. These walls, too, can not remain as they are, and we have no one to trust to but the Rosmin mason."

"Since that is the case," said Karl, "I propose that we paint the walls ourselves. I am a dab-hand at marbling."

"You are?" replied Anton, looking at him with some anxiety. "No; I think we had better make all the rooms one color. What do you think of brown?"

"Hum—not bad," said Karl.

"I know it is a favorite color of Fräulein Lenore's. It must not be too dark, though, but a bright mixture of yellow, gray, red, and green, with, perhaps, a little black in it."

"Aha!" said Karl, disconcerted; "a peculiar sort of brown, I suppose."

"Of course," continued Anton, eagerly drawing his chair nearer; "we will mix it ourselves."

"That's my way," said Karl; "but I tell you beforehand, these chalk colors are the very deuce! You paint a blue, the next day you have white; you have the most beautiful orange in your brush, and when it has dried on the wall it is a dirty yellow."

"Between ourselves," replied Anton, "we shall not succeed

very perfectly, but I think we shall manage to make things look tolerably comfortable."

The following day the hammering and painting began. The joiner and his men set up a workshop on the lower floor; above, the great brush of the painter kept unwearyingly passing and repassing over the walls, and white figures, with great aprons, carried buckets now up, now down. As for Karl, he seemed to have a dozen hands. Whenever he could get away from the farm, he painted woodwork and walls with all sorts of brushes. He ran round with a foot-measure, drove in nails and hooks for curtains, and the very next moment there he was again in the field or the stable, but every where whistling his soldier's songs and urging on the laborers. As the arrangements of the house progressed, his love of beautifying became more and more developed. He bought a quantity of oil-paint, which he found excellent, and displayed a decided talent for the art. He now ventured to give to several objects, which seemed to him qualified to receive it, the appearance of finely-polished wood, and, with the aid of a soft brush and a bunch of feathers, succeeded in producing wonderful effects. He even carried his brush and his beautifying into the farm-yard, and teased Anton into consenting to a general white-washing of the mud walls. "They will dry in this weather just as well as in summer," said he. "My only regret is, that I can't wash the straw thatch." To make up for that, however, he was determined to give the two new potato-carts and the best plow a coating of beautiful blue oil-paint. "One must have something pleasant for the eye to rest on here," said he, by way of apology. "And it will pay for itself, for these Poles get on better with gayly-colored things."

The castle was temporarily arranged, and the arrival of the family expected on a cold December day. The sky had carried out Karl's wishes, most effectually covering the earth with a pure white mantle, and hiding many an eyesore from the expected party. The snow lay thick on pasture and sands, the summits of the pines wore white crowns, and the leafless shrubs glittered with frost-crystals. The ugly straw thatches were whitewashed to some purpose, the broken parapets of the bridge filled up. Each projection of the castle walls, the top of the tower, the whole roof, was capped with dazzling white, while the red-brown walls stood out in bold relief below. Within, it was a busy and exciting day. Wagons of furniture and stores were unpacked, and all arranged as well

as the haste allowed. The farmer's wife and the housekeeper wove great garlands of fir-branches, and decorated the hall and the room doors. The sun set, and the silver landscape turned to gold, till the rising moon suffused it with a mysterious blue light. Several lamps were lit in the house, as many candles as possible placed in the apartments, the stoves all burned cheerily, and the fir-twigs filled the air with their fragrance. The gay curtains were drawn, and the open suite of rooms looked so habitable, that Anton asked himself in amazement how the labors of a few weeks could have wrought such a change as this. Karl had placed pitch-pans on both sides of the castle, and they shed a cheerful glow around.

Meanwhile all the dependents assembled in the hall—the forester in a new green coat, the memorial of his battles on his breast, a deer-hound at his side, stood in military attitude next to the German farmer and the shepherd. The housekeeper and the farmer's wife had put their best ribbons on their caps, and tripped to and fro in restless expectation. Karl, too, appeared in his hussar's frock.

Meanwhile Anton went once more through the rooms, and listened for the crack of the whip that should announce the baron's arrival. His own heart beat: for him, too, a new era was about to begin. After all, his life here had been a pleasant one enough hitherto: he and his trusty ally had felt themselves the masters of the castle, and had got through their anxieties cheerfully together. Now, however, Karl must take up his quarters in the farm-yard, while Anton, according to the wish of the baroness, was to occupy a room in the castle, so that he must come into daily relations with the family, and he now asked himself of what nature these would be. The baron was almost a stranger to him: how would he suit this baron? And he was blind too—yes, blind. Lenore had written him word that the surgeon gave no hope of the injured optic nerve ever recovering. This had been kept back from the sufferer, who comforted himself with the hope that time and skill might yet remove the dark cloud from his eyes. But Anton confided the truth to Karl, and was obliged to tell all the dependents that the baron was at present suffering from his eyes, and obliged to wear a bandage over them; and he read upon the faces of all that they felt this was a misfortune for the property. And his heart beat unquietly, too, when he thought of Lenore, with whom he should now be brought into constant contact. How would she and her mother treat him?

He determined carefully to suppress what he now felt to have been idle claims, and so to behave from the first as to afford them no cause for mortifying his self-respect. And yet he could not help wondering whether they would treat him as a friend and an equal, or make him feel that he was a hired dependent. It was in vain that he said to himself that his own feelings made the latter arrangement desirable; he could not check the delightful visions that would arise of life led with Lenore on equal terms.

The crack of the whip was now heard in the village, and soon the family and establishment arrived. The farm-servants, the landlord, and a few of the villagers were grouped around the pitch-pans. The farmers rushed forward to open the carriage-door, and as Lenore jumped out, and her face was seen, the women pressed nearer, and the men broke out into loud acclamations. All looked in eager expectation at the carriage. But the welcome met with no return. The baron was got out with some difficulty, and with sunken head, supported by his wife and daughter, he toiled up the steps. The pale face of the baroness from behind him had only a mute glance for the tenants and servants—only a short nod of recognition for Anton, who proceeded to lead them to their suite of rooms.

"All very nice, Mr. Wohlfart," said she, with quivering lips; and as he remained standing and waiting for his first orders, she dismissed him with a wave of the hand, and the words, "I thank you." When the door had closed upon Anton, the baron stood helpless in the strange room, and the baroness broke out into loud weeping. Lenore leaned against the window, looking out into the snow-covered plain, with its black wall at the horizon, and great tears rolled silently down her cheeks. It was with a heavy heart that Anton returned to tell the people assembled that the family were fatigued and overcome, and would not be seen by them till the morning. Karl had the carriage unpacked, and led the old cook, who wept like her mistress, into the underground kitchen. None of the family reappeared that evening, and the light was soon put out in their rooms; but the pitch still glowed and flickered in the wind, and a black cloud rose above the window where the baron sat hiding his face in his hands.

Such was the entrance of this family upon their new estate.

"How beautifully Wohlfart has arranged every thing!" said Lenore to her mother the following day.

"These high rooms are dreadful," replied the baroness, wrapping her shawl around her; "and the monotonous brown of the walls makes them still more desolate!"

"It is surely time to send and ask him to come here and speak to us?" suggested Lenore, timidly.

"Your father is not yet in a mood to speak to him."

"Do not leave my father alone with Wohlfart," implored Lenore. "It would be horrible if he were to treat him rudely"

The baroness sighed. "We must accustom ourselves to pay to a stranger in our house a degree of attention and observance which will be irksome both to your father and to us."

"How will you arrange about the housekeeping?" asked Lenore, again. "Wohlfart will, of course, have his meals with us?"

"Impossible!" said the baroness, firmly. "You know what a melancholy thing our dinner is. Your father is not yet calm enough to be able to bear the daily presence of a stranger."

"Is he to eat with the servants, then?" asked Lenore, bitterly.

"He will have his table laid in his own room, and on Sundays we shall always invite him, and, if he is not disagreeable to your father, often in the evenings also. More would be troublesome to all parties. It is desirable to reserve at first a comfortable amount of freedom. Your father's state will be sufficient excuse."

She rang, and Anton was summoned. Lenore went to meet him, and with tearful eyes silently held out her hand. Anton was moved when he saw the traces of suffering in her mother's face. The baroness prayed him to be seated, and in well-chosen words expressed her gratitude for all he had done, and asked him both for information and advice. Then she went on to say, "My husband wishes to speak to you. I earnestly beg you to remember that the baron is an invalid. He has suffered fearfully in mind and body. He is never free from pain, and his helplessness distresses him inexpressibly. We are careful to avoid whatever may excite him, and yet we can not avert dark hours, nay, days. You, sir, will be considerate if his gloomy mood should affect you disagreeably. Time, they say, heals all. I hope it will restore him to peace."

Anton promised all possible consideration.

"My husband will naturally wish to be placed in possession of all the facts connected with this property, and yet I dread any painful impressions for him. Therefore, whenever you have any thing important to communicate, try to make

the matter intelligible to me in the first instance. I may thus spare you much that is disagreeable. I shall have my writing-table carried into one of the rooms near yours, and I shall daily spend part of my mornings there. Lenore is her father's private secretary. And now, be kind enough to wait till I have announced your visit to the baron."

The baroness left the room. Anton looked down gravely. Lenore went up to him and said, as cheerfully as she could, "Brown walls, Wohlfart! my favorite color. You are not glad we are come, you ungallant man!"

"Only on your own account," replied Anton, pointing to the snowy plain. "Whenever I walked through the fields, I have always thought how lonely you would be here, and when I paced these great rooms of an evening, I have feared that your time would hang very heavily. The town is more than six miles distant, and even there you will find but little; the wretched lending-library will hardly satisfy you."

"I will draw," said Lenore; "I will do fancy work. Alas! I shall find it difficult, Mr. Wohlfart, for I am not skillful. I do not care for lace on either cuff or collar; but mamma, who is accustomed to have every thing so beautiful, and in such order—oh, how sorry I am for mamma!"

Anton tried to comfort her.

"We were obliged to leave the capital," cried Lenore; "we should all have perished if we had remained in that dreadful *entourage*. Our own property in other hands, cold, distant faces on all sides, every where false friends, smooth words, and a pity which maddened. I am delighted that we are alone here. And even were we to suffer cold and hunger, I could bear it better far than the shrugging of Madame Werner's shoulders. I have learned to hate my fellow-creatures," said she, vehemently "When you have been with papa, I will come down, and then you must show me the house, the farm, and the village. I want to see where my poor pony is, and what the people about look like."

The baroness now returned, and led Anton into her husband's room. Helpless and confused, the baron rose from his chair. Anton felt the deepest compassion for him. He looked at his sunken face, bent figure, and the black bandage over his eyes. He warmly declared his ardent wish to be of use to him, and begged his indulgence if he had in any way erred in judgment hitherto. Then he proceeded to tell him how he found the estate, and what had been done up to the present time.

The baron heard the report almost in silence, only making a few short observations in return. But when Anton proceeded, with the utmost delicacy indeed, but still with the precision of a man of business, to state the obligations under which the baron at present lay, and his inadequate means of fulfilling them, the nobleman writhed in his chair like a victim on the rack. And Anton keenly felt how painful it must needs be to him to have a stranger thus introduced into his most secret affairs—a stranger anxious to spare his feelings, it is true, but at every moment betraying that anxiety, and so giving fresh offense. The baroness, who stood behind her husband, looked on nervously at the attempts he made to control his irritation, but at length she waved her hand so significantly that Anton had abruptly to break off his report.

When he had left the room, the baron flung himself back in the utmost excitement, and exclaimed, "You have set a trustee over me." He was perfectly beside himself, and the baroness vainly attempted to compose him.

Such was Anton's entrance into the family.

He too returned sadly to his room. From that moment he felt convinced that it would hardly be possible to establish a good understanding between himself and the baron. He was accustomed, in matters of business, to express himself curtly, and to be promptly understood, and he now foresaw long disquisitions on the part of the ladies, succeeded probably by no decision at all. Even his position with regard to them appeared uncertain. True, the baroness had treated him with the utmost graciousness, but still as a stranger. He feared that she would continue the great lady, giving just as much of her confidence as might be useful to herself, but warding off all intimacy by a cold politeness. Even Lenore's friendly voice could not restore his equanimity. They went over the premises silently and thoughtfully, like two men of business engaged in making an estimate.

Such as these first days promised was Anton's life for the next few months, anxious, monotonous, formal. He wrote, kept accounts, and ate alone in his room, and when invited to join the family circle the party was far from a cheerful one. The baron sat there like a lump of ice, a check upon all free and animated conversation.

Formerly Anton used to admire all the accessories of the family, the arrangement of their *salons*, and the elegant trifles around. Now, the self-same furniture stood in the drawing-

room suite—even the little foreign birds had survived their winter journey—the same carpets, the same worsted-work, even the same perfume was there; but now the very birds seemed to him rather bores than otherwise, and soon nothing about the room interested him but the share he had himself had in putting it in order.

Anton had brought with him a profound respect for the polished tone, the easy conversation, and the graceful forms of social intercourse that prevailed in the family circle.

But, crushed and downcast as the Von Rothsattels now were, he could not expect the same light-hearted grace that had captivated him at Frau von Baldereck's parties. They had been torn away from their accustomed circle; all the external influences, and the excitement which keep the spirits elastic, and help us to vanquish sorrow, were wanting now, and he modestly confessed that he could afford no substitute for them. But there was more than this to disenchant him. When, after a silent evening, he returned to his own room, he often regretted that they took no part in much that interested him; that their culture, in short, was of a perfectly different order; and, before long, he took the liberty of doubting whether their culture was the better of the two. Almost all his reading was new to them, and when they discussed the newspapers, he marveled at their ignorance of foreign politics. History was by no means a favorite study with the baron, and if, for example, he condemned the English Constitution, he showed himself, at the same time, very little acquainted with it. On another evening, it came out, to Anton's distress, that the family's views of the position of the island of Ceylon widely differed from those established by geographers. The baroness, who was fond of reading aloud, revered Chateaubriand, and read fashionable novels by lady writers. Anton found Atala unnatural, and the novels insipid. In short, he soon discovered that those with whom he lived contemplated the universe from a very different point of view to his own. Unconsciously they measured all things by the scale of their own class-interests. Whatever ministered to these found favor, however unbearable to mankind at large; whatever militated against them was rejected, or at least pushed out of sight. Their opinions were often mild, sometimes even liberal, but they always seemed to wear an invisible helmet, visor up, and to look through the narrow space on the doings of common mortals; and whenever they saw any thing in these that was displeas-

ing, but unalterable, they silently shut down the visor, and isolated themselves. The baron sometimes did this awkwardly, but his wife understood to perfection how, by a bewitching turn of the hand, to shut out whatever was unwelcome.

The family belonged to the German church in Neudorf; but there was no choir there, and no pew near the altar. They would have had to sit in the body of the church among the rustics: that was out of the question. So the baron set up a chapel in the castle, and sent every now and then for a minister. Anton seldom made his appearance at this domestic worship, preferring to ride to Neudorf, where he sat by the side of the bailiff among the country people.

He had other vexations too. A wine-merchant's traveler forced his way on one occasion through sand and forest into the very study of the baron. He was an audacious fellow, with a great gift of the gab, and a devoted lover of races and steeple-chases. He brought with him a whole budget of the latest sporting intelligence, and bamboozled the baron into ordering a pipe of port wine. Anton looked at the empty purse, cursed the pipe, and hurried into the audience-chamber of the baroness. It required a long feminine intrigue to effect the retraction of the order given.

The baron was displeased with his carriage-horses, which were no longer young, and, besides, of a chestnut color This last peculiarity might, indeed, have been supposed immaterial to him now, but it had been an annoyance for years, his family having always had a preference for roans; nay, was there not an old distich to the following effect:

"Who rides thus through the fray alone?
I ween a noble knight,
The red drops fall from his gallant roan,
With red is the saddle dight."

This was supposed to allude to some remote ancestor, and on this account the Rothsattels (red-saddles) prized roans above all other horseflesh; but, as the color is rare in handsome horses, the baron had never had the good luck to meet with them. Now, however, Fate willed that a horse-dealer in the district should just bring round a pair. The blind man evinced a delight which much affected the ladies. He had them ridden, and driven backward and forward, carefully felt them all over, took Karl's opinion as to their merits, and revolved a plan of pleasantly surprising the baroness by their purchase. Karl ran to advertise Anton of the impending danger, and he

again entered the audience-chamber, but on this occasion he met with no favorable hearing. The baroness, indeed, allowed that he was not wrong in theory, but still she implored him to let the baron have his own way. At length the new horses were in all secrecy led to their stalls, and the purchaser gave, besides the chestnuts and all the money he had in his private purse, a promise of letting the horse-dealer have, after the next harvest, two hundred bushels of oats at an unreasonably low price. Anton and Karl, in their zeal for the estate, were highly indignant at this when it first came to their knowledge months later.

The forester had the misfortune not to be an especial favorite. The baroness disliked the abrupt manner of the old man, who, in his solitude, had entirely lost the obsequiousness to which she was accustomed. One evening a plan was disclosed of giving him notice, and replacing him by a younger man, who might be dressed in livery, and serve as a representative huntsman, the family having been used to a functionary of this kind on their late estate. Anton had some difficulty in concealing his annoyance while stating that, in the disturbed state of the district, the experienced man, who was feared by every scapegrace around, was of more use than a stranger. Lenore was on his side, and the plan was given up, with a look of resignation on the part of the baroness, and an icy silence on that of her husband. Both henceforth endured the uncouth old man with outward composure, but with visors down.

These were slight discords, indeed, such as must necessarily occur when we live with people whose habits of thought and action differ from our own; but it was no sign of contentment that Anton kept constantly repeating this to himself. Not only did Karl suit him in many ways better than the family, but so did the forester, and the shepherd too; and he sometimes felt with pride that he was other than they were—that he was one of the people. Lenore, too, was not what he had imagined her. He had always honored in her the lady of rank, and felt her cordial friendship a favor; but now she ceased to impress him as a distinguished person. He intimately knew the pattern of all her cuffs and collars, and very plainly saw a small rent in her dress which the careless girl herself was long in observing. He had read through the few books that she had brought with her, and had often, in conversation, overstepped the limits of her information. Her way of expressing herself no longer excited his admiration,

and he would have been less indignant than of yore if his friend Fink had made inquiry as to her sense. She had less information than another girl of his acquaintance, and her tastes were not half so cultivated; but hers was a healthy, upright nature; she had quick feelings and noble instincts, and oh! she was beautiful. That he had always thought her, but his tender reverence long wrapped her image round with a sacred halo. It was now, however, when he saw her daily in her simple morning dress, in the every-day moods of this working world, that he first felt the full spell of her blooming youth. Yet he was often dissatisfied with her too. One of the first days after her arrival she had anxiously inquired how she could make herself useful in the house, and he told her that her superintendence in the kitchen, and exact keeping of accounts, might be of very great use indeed. He had ruled an account-book for her, and had had the pleasure of teaching her how to make entries in it. She threw herself warmly into the new pursuit, and ran into the kitchen ten times a day to see how Balbette was getting on; but her calculations were not much to be depended upon, and after having for a week conscientiously labored at the task, some days of sunshine came, and then she could not resist accompanying the forester on his rounds after game, or riding far beyond the boundary of the estate on her little pony, forgetting alike the cook and her book-keeping.

Again she purposed studying history and learning a little English under Anton's superintendence. Anton was delighted. But she could not recollect dates, found the pronunciation of English impossible, and sauntered off into the stable, or went into the room of the bailiff, whose mechanical achievements she could watch with the utmost interest for hours at a time. One day, when Anton came to call her to her English lesson, he found her in Karl's room, a plane in her hand, working hard at the seat of a new sledge, and good-naturedly saying, "Don't take so much trouble with me, Wohlfart; I can learn nothing: I have always been a dunce."

The snow again lay thick on the ground, and millions of ice-crystals glittered in the sunshine on bush and tree. Karl had two sledges in order, one a double-seated one, the other a running sledge for the young lady, which, with her assistance, he had painted beautifully.

At the next morning conference Anton had to announce to the baroness that he must go in the afternoon to Tarow on some police business.

"We know the Tarowskis from having met them at the Baths," said the baroness. "We were quite intimate while there with Frau von Tarowska and her daughter. I earnestly wish that the baron should have some acquaintance in the neighborhood. Perhaps I may be able to prevail upon him to pay a visit with us to-day. At all events, we ladies will avail ourselves of your escort, and make an excursion thither."

Anton gently reminded her of the vanished Bratzky and his own suspicions.

"They are only suspicions," said the baron, soothingly, "and there can be no doubt that it is our duty to call. Indeed, I can not believe that Herr von Tarowski had any thing to do with the man's disappearance."

In the afternoon the two sledges were brought round. The baroness seated herself with her husband in the larger one, and Lenore insisted upon driving her own. "Wohlfart shall sit behind me on the seat," decided she.

The baron whispered to his wife, "Wohlfart!"

"I can not allow you to drive alone," calmly replied she. "Have no anxiety. He is in your service, besides; there is no great impropriety; and you and I shall be together."

The little bells sounded merrily across the plain. Lenore sat in the highest spirits in her little nutshell of a seat, and loudly urged on her horse. She often turned round, and her laughing face looked so lovely under her dark cap that Anton's whole heart went out toward her. Her green veil fluttered in the wind, and brushed across his cheeks, hung over his face, and concealed the view. The next moment his breath moved the ribbon round her neck, and he saw that only that slight silken covering lay between his hand and her white throat and golden hair. Absorbed in this contemplation, he could hardly resist the delight of gently passing his fur glove over her hood, when a hare jumped from its form close to him, shaking its ears threateningly, and significantly flinging its legs in the air. Anton understood the friendly hint, and drew back the fur glove; and the hare, pleased to have done a good turn, galloped off over the plain.

Our hero turned his thoughts into another direction. "This white road bears no trace of man's presence, no slides, no footprints; there is no life around to disturb the silent sleep of nature. We are travelers penetrating into regions hitherto untrodden. One tree is like another, the snow expanse is boundless, the silence of the grave around, and the laughing

sunshine above. I wish we were going on thus the whole day through."

"I am so glad to drive you for once," said Lenore, bending back, and giving him her hand.

Anton so far forgot the hare as to imprint a kiss upon her glove.

"It is Danish leather," laughed Lenore; "do not give yourself the trouble."

"Here is a hole," said Anton, prepared to renew the attempt.

"You are very attentive to-day," cried Lenore, slowly withdrawing her hand. "The mood suits you charmingly, Wohlfart."

The fur glove was again stretched out to detain the hand withdrawn. At that moment two crows on the nearest tree began a violent dispute, screamed, croaked, and flew about Anton's head.

"Begone, you wretched creatures!" thought Anton, in his excitement; "you shall not disturb me any more."

But Lenore looked full and frankly at him. "I am not sure, either, that you ought to be so attentive," said she, gravely. "You should not kiss my hand, for I have no wish to return the compliment, and what is right for the one must be right for the other. Huzza! my horse, forward!"

"I am curious to know how these Poles will receive us," said Anton, resuming their former conversation.

"They can not be otherwise than friendly," returned Lenore. "We lived for weeks with Frau von Tarowska, and took every excursion together. She was the most elegant of all the ladies at the Baths, and her daughters, too, made a great impression by their distinguished bearing. They are very lovely and refined."

"He has eyes, though, exactly like those of the forester's fox. I would not trust him a yard out of my sight."

"I have made myself very smart to-day," laughed Lenore, again turning round; "for the girls are, as I said, lovely, and the Poles shall not say that we Germans look ill beside them. How do you like my dress, Wohlfart?" She turned back the flap of her pelisse.

"I shall admire no other half so much," Anton replied.

"You true-hearted Mr. Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, again reaching out her hand. Alas! the warning hare, the crows, would have been powerless to break the spell which attracted the fur glove to the Danish leather; something stronger must interfere.

When Anton stretched out his hand for the third time, he marveled to see it rise against his will, and describe a circle in the air, while he found himself outstretched in the snow. Looking round in amazement, he saw Lenore sitting by the overturned sledge, while the horse stood still, and laughed after his fashion. The lady had looked too much at her companion and too little at the way, and so they had been upset. Both jumped up lightly. Anton raised the sledge, and they were soon galloping onward once more. But the sledge-idyl was ended. Lenore looked steadily before her, and Anton occupied himself in shaking the snow out of his sleeves.

The sledges turned into a spacious court. A long, one-storied farm-house, whitewashed, and roofed with shingles, looked upon the wooden stables. Anton sprang out, and asked a servant in livery for the dwelling of Herr von Tarowski.

"This is the palace," replied the Pole, with a low obeisance, and proceeded to help the ladies out of the sledges. Lenore and the baroness exchanged looks of amazement. They entered a dirty hall; several bearded domestics rushed up to them, eagerly tore off their wraps, and threw a low door open. A numerous party was assembled in the large sitting-room. A tall figure in black silk came forward to meet them, and received them with the best grace in the world. So did the daughters—slender girls, with their mother's eyes and manners. Several of the gentlemen were introduced—Herr von this, Herr von that, all elegant-looking men in evening dress. At last the master of the house came in, his cunning face beaming with cordial hospitality, and his pair of fox's eyes looking perfectly harmless. The reception was faultless—on all sides the pleasant ease of perfect self-possession. The baron and the ladies were treated as welcome additions, and Anton too had his share of attention. His business was soon transacted, and Herr von Tarow smilingly reminded him that they had met before.

"That rogue of an inspector got off, after all," said he; "but do not be uneasy, he will not escape his fate."

"I hope not," replied Anton; "nor yet his abettors."

Herr von Tarow's eyes tried hard to look dove-like as he went on to say, "The fellow must be concealed somewhere about."

"Possibly somewhere very near," said Anton, casting a significant glance at the mean-looking buildings around.

Our hero looked in vain among the gentlemen present for

the stranger he had previously seen, and charitably attributed to him good reasons for wishing to remain unseen by German eyes. However, to make up for him, there was another gentleman of a striking aspect, who seemed to be treated with especial respect. "They come and go, assemble and disperse," thought Anton, "just as the landlord said; there is a whole band of them to feel anxious about, not merely a few individuals." At that moment the stranger came up and began a courteous conversation. However unstudied the speaker's manner might appear, yet Anton remarked that he led the conversation, with the view of extracting his opinions and feelings as a German. This made him reserved; and the Pole, finding him so, soon lost his interest in him, and turned to the ladies.

Anton had now time to look about him. A Vienna pianoforte stood amid furniture evidently made by the village carpenter, and near the sofa a tattered carpet was spread over the black boards. The ladies sat on velvet seats around a worn-out table. The mistress of the house and her grown-up daughters had elegant Parisian toilettes; but a side door being casually opened, Anton caught a sight of some children running about in the next room so scantily clothed that he heartily pitied them. They, however, did not seem to feel the cold, and were screaming and fighting like little demons.

A fine damask table-cloth was now laid on the unsteady table, and a silver tea-kettle put down. The conversation went on most pleasantly. Graceful French *bon mots* and animated exclamations in melodious Polish blended occasionally with an admixture of quiet German. The sudden bursts of laughter, the gestures and the eagerness, all showed Anton that he was among foreigners. They spoke rapidly, and excitement shone in their eyes and reddened their cheeks.

They were a more excitable people, more elastic, and more impressionable than his countrymen. Anton remarked with amazement how perfectly Lenore seemed in her element among them. Her face, too, grew flushed; she laughed and gesticulated like the rest; and her eyes looked, he thought, boldly into the courteous faces of the gentlemen present. The same smile, the same hearty, natural manner that she had enchanted him with, when alone, she now lavished upon strangers, who had acted as highwaymen against her father's interests. This displeased him to the utmost. Then the saloon, so incongruous in its arrangements, the carpet dirty and torn,

the children in the next room barefooted, and the master of the house the secret patron of a dishonest rogue, and perhaps worse still! Anton contented himself with coldly looking on, and said as little as he possibly could.

At last a young gentleman struck a few chords on the piano, and all sprang up and voted for a dance. The lady of the house rang, four wild-looking men rushed into the room, snatched up the grand piano, and carried it off. The whole party swept through the hall to an apartment opposite. Anton was tempted to rub his eyes as he entered it. It was an empty room, with rough-cast walls, benches around them, and a frightful old stove in a corner. In the middle, linen was hung on lines to dry. Anton could hardly suppose they meant to dance here; but the linen was torn down by one servant in the twinkling of an eye, while another ran to the stove, and was equally expeditious in blowing up the fire, and in a very few moments six couples stood up for a quadrille. As there was a lady wanting, a young count, with a black beard like velvet, and a wondrously beautiful pair of blue eyes, bound his cambric handkerchief round his arm, and with a graceful courtesy announced himself a lady. He was immediately led out by another gentleman. Their dancing, in spite of its fashionable character, betrayed at times the fire and impetuosity of their race. Lenore threw herself into it heart and soul.

Meanwhile the baroness was conversing with great animation with her host, and Frau von Tarow made it her occupation to amuse the baron. Here, then, were all the social forms, the keen enjoyment of the present, which Anton had so often admired, but now they only excited a cold smile. It did not seem to him creditable that a German family should be on terms of such intimacy with recent enemies—people who were probably at this very time plotting against them and their country. Accordingly, when the first dance was over, and Lenore, passing him, asked why he did not dance with her, he replied, "I am every moment expecting to see Bratzky's face appear in some corner of the room."

"We will not think of him at present," returned Lenore, turning away offended.

Dance followed dance, the heads of the young people swam, their curls hung down damp, and relaxed with their exertions. Another rush of bearded domestics, and iced Champagne was brought in. The dancers tossed it off standing, and immedi-

ately a cry rose on all sides for a Polish mazurka—the national dance. Now, then, the dresses fluttered wide and high; the dancers positively flew along; the ladies were tossed like balls from one partner's arm to another; and Lenore, alas! in the midst of it all.

Anton stood near the distinguished Pole, carrying on a spiritless conversation, and coldly listened to the praises the former liberally bestowed on the German dancer. The rapid movements and strong excitement that were natural to the Polish girls made Lenore wild, and, Anton regretted to see, unfeminine; and his glance wandered away from her to the rough walls, the dusty stove, in which an immense fagot was burning, and the ceiling, from which long gray cobwebs hung down.

It was late before the baroness broke up the party. The furs were brought in, the guests were wrapped therein, and the little bells sounded again cheerily over the snowy scene. But Anton was glad that Lenore now drove her father, and that he had to take care of the baroness. Silently he guided the sledge, thinking all the while that another whom he knew would never have swung to and fro in the mazes of the mazurka beneath the fluttering cobwebs, and in the house of her country's foes.

CHAPTER XXX.

Mr. Itzig was now regularly established in business. Who ever visited him passed through a much-frequented hall, and went up a not entirely clean staircase, at the head of which was a white door, on which a great plate revealed the name of "V. Itzig." This door was closed. It had a very massive China handle, and was altogether much more suggestive and imposing than Ehrenthal's had been. Passing through this door, the visitor entered an empty lobby, in which a shrewd youth spent the day as half porter, half errand-boy, and a spy besides. This youth differed from the original Itzig only by a species of shabby gentility in his appearance. He wore his master's old clothes—shining silk waistcoats, and a coat a little too large for him. He showed, in short, that the new firm was more advanced in matters of taste and toilette than the in many respects commonplace establishment of Ehrenthal.

The visitor, advancing through the lobby, was received by Mr. Itzig in one of two small rooms, of which the first contained little furniture, but two strikingly handsome lamps—a temporary security for the unpaid interest of a note of hand. The second was his sleeping apartment; in it were a simple bed, a long sofa, and a large round mirror, with a broad gilt frame, an acquisition from the secret stores of the worthy Pinkus. Itzig himself was marvelously changed, and on dark days, in his dimly-lighted office, he might really—looked at from a little distance—have almost passed for a gentleman. His haggard face had filled out, his great freckles had faded away, and his red hair, through much pomade and skillful brushing, had grown darker and more manageable. He had still a preference for black; but his clothes were new now, and fitted him better; for Mr. Itzig had acquired a taste for externals. He no longer grudged himself good food—nay, he even allowed himself wine. Yet, insignificant as his new establishment was, Itzig only used it at night and during office-hours. His inclinations still led him to his old haunts at Löbel Pinkus's. Thus he led a double life—that of a respectable man of business in his newly-painted office, beneath the glare of his solar lamps; and when in the caravanserai, which fitted his taste far better, a modest sort of life, with red woolen curtains, and a four-cornered chest for a sofa. Perhaps this shelter suited him so exactly, because of his uncontested influence over the master of the house. Pinkus, to his shame be it spoken, had sunk into a mere tool of Veitel's, and his wife, too, was devoted in her allegiance to the rising man.

On the present occasion Itzig sat carelessly on his sofa, and smoked a pipe with an amber mouth-piece. He was completely the gentleman, and expected a visitor of distinction. The bell rang, the servant flew to the door, and a sharp voice was heard. Next there arose a dispute in the lobby, which moved Veitel to shut up his writing-table in all haste, and to put the key into his pocket.

"Not at home, indeed! He is at home, you wretched greenhorn you!" cried the sharp voice to the guardian of the door. Next some resisting body was heard to be thrust on one side. Veitel buried himself in an old mortgage. The door opened, and Hippus appeared, red-faced and much ruffled. He had never looked more like an old raven.

"So you deny yourself, do you? You tell that grub yonder to send away old friends! Of course, you are become quite

genteel, you fool! Did one ever meet with such barefaced ingratitude? Because the fellow has swindled himself into two fine rooms, his former associates are no longer good enough for him! But you have reckoned without your host, my boy, as far as I am concerned; I am not to be got rid of so easily."

Veitel looked at the angry little man before him with an expression of countenance by no means friendly.

"Why did you make a scene with the young man?" he said, coldly; "he has done nothing wrong. I was expecting a visitor on business, and I gave orders to exclude all strangers. How could I know that you would be coming? Have we not settled that you should only visit me in the evening? Why do you disturb me during my business hours?"

"Your business hours, you young gosling, with your shell still hanging about you!" cried Hippus, still more irate, and threw himself on the sofa. "Your business hours!" he continued, with infinite contempt; "any hours are good enough for *your* business."

"You are drunk again, Hippus," answered Veitel, thoroughly roused. "How often have I told you that I will have nothing to do with you when you come out of the spirit-shop?"

"Indeed!" cried Hippus; "you son of a witch, my visit is at all times an honor to you. I drunk!" he hiccoughed out; "and with what, you jack-pudding you? How is a man to get drunk," he screamed out, "when he has not wherewithal to pay for a glass?"

"I knew that he was without money again," said Veitel, in exasperation. "I gave you a dollar quite lately, but you are a perfect sponge. It is a pity to waste a farthing upon you."

"You will prove, though, that it is not at all a pity," answered the old man, tauntingly; "you will give me ten dollars here on the spot."

"That I will not," cried Veitel. "I am sick of supplying you. You know our agreement; you are only to have money given you when you do something for me in return. And now you are not in a condition either to read or write."

"I am always good enough for you and such as you, even if I had had a ten times better breakfast," said the old man, more calmly. "Give me what you have got for me to do. You are become a covetous rascal, but I'll put up with you. I will forgive your having denied yourself; I will forgive your having become a presumptuous ass—making a show

with lamps that were meant for your betters; and I will not deprive you of my advice, provided, be it understood, I duly get my honorarium. And so we will make peace, my son. Now tell me what deviltry you have in hand."

Veitel pushed a thick parchment toward him, and said, "First of all, you must look over that, write me out an abstract of it, and tell me what you think of it. It has been offered me for sale. Now, however, I am expecting some one, so you must go into the other room, sit down at the table, and get through your task. When it is done we will talk about the money."

Mr. Hippus took the heavy deed under his arm and steered toward the door.

"To-day I am going to oblige you again, because you are a good boy," said he, affectionately, lifting his hand to pat Veitel on the cheek.

Veitel tolerated the caress, and was going to shut the door, when the drunken old man turned round once more, and inquired with a cunning leer, "So you expect some one, my child? Whom do you expect, little Itzig? Is it a lad or a lady?"

"It is a money-matter," said Veitel, shrugging his shoulders.

"A money-matter!" repeated Hippus, with tender approbation of his associate. "Ay, you are great in them—an accomplished swindler. Truly he who gets money from you is lost; it were better for him to jump into the water at once, though water is a despicable element, you confounded little swindler you!" And, raising his head, he fixed his swimming eyes affectionately on Veitel.

"And yet you yourself are come to get money from me," replied Veitel, with a forced smile.

"Yes, I am determined," said Hippus, stammering. "I am not flesh and blood! I am Hippus! I am Death!" and he tried to laugh intelligently.

The door-bell rang. Veitel desired him to keep quiet, shut the door upon him, took up his amber pipe, and awaited his visitor.

A sword was heard to clatter in the lobby—a hussar officer came in. Eugene Rothsattel had become a little older since the last winter, his fine face was more haggard, and he had a blue ring round his eyes. He put on an appearance of indifference, which did not deceive Mr. Itzig for a single second,

for behind that mask his experienced glance detected the fever peculiar to hard-pressed debtors.

"Mr. Itzig?" inquired the officer *de haut en bas.*

"Such is my name," said Veitel, rising carelessly from the sofa. Eugene looked at him uneasily. This was the very man against whom his father had been warned, and now fate had driven him into the same snare. "I have to pay a debt in the course of the next few days to certain agents," began the lieutenant, "gentlemen of your acquaintance. When I proposed to hold a consultation with them, I was informed by both that they had sold their claims to you."

"I bought them unwillingly," replied Itzig. "I am not fond of having any thing to do with military men. Here are two notes of hand, one for eleven hundred, and the other for eight hundred, making a total of nineteen hundred dollars. Do you recognize these signatures as yours?" he coldly inquired, producing the documents; "and do you acknowledge nineteen hundred to be the sum borrowed by you?"

"I suppose it must be about that," said the lieutenant, reluctantly.

"I ask whether you acknowledge that to be the sum that you have to pay me on these notes of hand?"

"In the devil's name, yes," cried the lieutenant. "I own the debt, though I did not receive the half of it in cash."

Veitel locked up the papers in his desk, and, with a shrug of his shoulders, said ironically, "At all events, I have paid the whole sum to the parties herein named. Accordingly, I shall summon you to pay me to-morrow and the next day."

The officer was silent for a while, and a flush slowly overspread his sunken cheeks. At last, after a hard struggle, he began: "I beg of you, Mr. Itzig, to give me a little more time."

Veitel took up his amber pipe and leisurely turned it round. "I can give you no further credit," said he.

"Come, Itzig, be reasonable," said the officer, with forced familiarity. "I shall very probably soon be able to pay you."

"You will have as little money in a few weeks' time as you have now," replied Veitel, rudely.

"I am ready to write an I. O. U. for a larger sum, if you will have patience."

"I never enter into any transactions of the kind," lied Veitel.

"I will procure you an acknowledgment of the debt from my father."

"The Baron Rothsattel would obtain as little credit with me as yourself."

The lieutenant angrily struck the floor with his sword: "And supposing I do not pay?" he broke out; "you know that I am not legally compelled to do so."

"I know," quietly replied Veitel. "Will you pay to-morrow and the next day?"

"I can not!" exclaimed Eugene, in despair.

"Then take care of the coat on your back," said Veitel, turning away.

"Wohlfart was right to warn me against you," cried Eugene, beside himself. "You are an obdurate—" he suppressed the last word.

"Speak your mind freely," said Itzig; "no one hears you. Your words are like the fire in my stove; it crackles now, in an hour it will be burned to ashes. What you say to me in private, the people in the street will say to you in three days' time if you do not pay."

Eugene turned away with a curse. On reaching the door he stood still for a moment, then rushed down stairs.

Veitel looked round triumphantly. "The son as well as the father! He, too, is safely noosed," said he to himself; "he can never procure the money. There is an end of the Rothsattels, and their Wohlfart will not be able to sustain them. When I am married to Rosalie, Ehrenthal's mortgages will be mine. That will be the time, too, for finding the vanished notes of hand among my father-in-law's papers. Then I shall have the baron completely in my power, and the estate will be mine."

After this soliloquy he opened the door that had shut out Mr. Hippus from the distinguished visitor—the sunken from the sinking—and he found the little advocate fast asleep over the deed. Itzig looked at him with hearty contempt, and said, "He grows burdensome. He said he was death; I wish he were dead, and I freed from him." Then roughly shaking up the old man, he screamed out to him, "You are fit for nothing but to sleep; why must you come here to snore? Go home; I will give you the deed when you are sober."

The advocate accordingly reeled away, promising to return the following afternoon. Itzig proceeded to brush his silk hat with enviable dexterity; he then put on his best coat, gave

his hair its most graceful curve, and went to the house of his antagonist Ehrenthal. As he entered the hall he cast a shy glance at the office door, and hurried on to the staircase. But he stopped on the lowest step. "There he is, sitting again in the office," said he, listening. "I hear him mutter; he often mutters so when he is alone. I will venture in; perhaps I can make something of him." So he stepped slowly to the door and listened again; then taking heart, he opened it suddenly. In the dimly-lighted room sat a stooping figure in a leathern chair, a shapeless hat on its head. The figure kept constantly nodding, and muttering unintelligible words. How changed was Hirsch Ehrenthal in the course of the past year! When he last drove over the baron's estate, he was a stout, respectable-looking man, a fresh, well-preserved man, who knew how to stick in his breast-pin to the best advantage, and cut a figure in ladies' eyes. Now the head that was constantly nodding in nervous debility was that of an old man, and the beard that hung down from his furrowed face had been untrimmed for weeks. He was a picture of that most lamentable decay, when the mind precedes the body on the way to second childhood.

The agent stood at the door and looked in dismay at his former master. Then, advancing nearer, he said, "I wish to speak to you, Mr. Ehrenthal."

The old man continued to nod his head, and answered in a trembling voice, "Hirsch Ehrenthal is my name; what have you to say to me?"

"I wish to speak to you on important business," continued Itzig.

"I hear," returned Ehrenthal, without looking up; "if the business be important, why do you not speak?"

"Do you know me, Hirsch Ehrenthal?" said Itzig, bending down and raising his voice.

The man in the leathern chair looked at him with languid eyes, and at length recognized him. He got up in all haste, and stood, his head still nodding, with a glance full of hatred and terror in his eyes. "What do you want here in my office?" cried he, with a quivering voice. "How can you come before me? Get out, man! get out!"

Itzig remained stationary. "Don't scream so; I am not doing any thing to you; I only want to speak to you on important subjects, if you will be calm as a man of your years should be."

"It is Itzig," murmured the old man; "he wants to speak on important subjects, and I am to be calm. How can I be calm," screamed he again, "when I see you before me? You are my enemy; you have ruined me here and ruined me there; you have been to me like the evil spirit with the sword, on which hangs the drop of gall. I opened my mouth, you pierced me with your sword, the gall has reached my heart; I needs must tremble when I see you."

"Be quiet," said Itzig; "and when you are so, listen to me."

"Is his name Itzig?" mumbled the old man to himself. "His name is Itzig, but the dogs bark at him as he walks through the streets. I will not see you," he again exclaimed. "Get out! I loathe the sight of you: I would rather have to do with a spider than with you."

To this Veitel replied in a resigned voice, "What has happened, Ehrenthal, has happened, and it's no use talking of it. You behaved unkindly to me, and I acted against you; both are true."

"He ate every Sabbath at my table," growled the old man.

"If you remember that," continued Itzig, "why, so will I. True, I have eaten at your table, and on that account I am sorry to be on bad terms with you. I have always felt a great attachment to your family."

"You have shown your attachment, young Itzig," continued the old man. "You are he who came into my house, and killed me before I am laid in my grave."

"What nonsense are you talking?" continued Veitel, impatiently. "Why do you always speak as if you were dead, and I the evil spirit with the sword? I am here, and I wish your prosperous life, and not your death. I will so contrive that you shall yet occupy a good position among our people, and that they who pass you in the street shall again take off their hats to you, as they did before Hirsch Ehrenthal became childish."

Ehrenthal mechanically took off his hat and sat down again. His hair had grown white.

"There ought to be friendship between you and me," continued Veitel, persuasively, "and your business ought to be as mine. I have sent to you more than one man of our connection, and have told you my wishes through him, and Mrs. Ehrenthal, your wife, has told you them too. I am become a man who can rank with the best men of business; I can show

you a safe capital larger than you imagine. Why should we not put our money together? If you will give me your daughter Rosalie to wife, I shall be able to act for you as your son-in-law."

Old Ehrenthal looked at the suitor with a glance in which something of his old cunning shone through his half-wittedness. "If you want my daughter Rosalie," replied he, "hear the only question I have to put: What will you give me if I give you Rosalie?"

"I will reckon it up to you at once," cried Veitel.

"You can reckon up a good deal, I dare say," said Ehrenthal, declining the statement, "but I will only require one thing: if you can give me back my son Bernhard, you may have my daughter. If you can not bring Bernhard out of the grave, so long as I have any voice left I shall say, 'Get out with you! get out of my office!' Get out!" screamed he, in a sudden transport of rage, clenching both fists against the suitor. Veitel quietly retreated into the shadow cast by the door, the old man sunk down again on his chair, and threatened and muttered to himself. Itzig watched him till his words again became unintelligible, when he shrugged his shoulders and left the room.

As he went up stairs to pay his visit to the ladies, he repeated the movement occasionally, to express his utter contempt of the poor imbecile below. He rang the bell, and was admitted by the untidy cook with a familiar smile.

Meanwhile Eugene drifted helplessly from one officer's room to another. He went to Feroni's; the oysters were flavorless, the Burgundy tasted like ink. Again he paced up and down the streets, the sweat of anguish on his brow. At last he sat down in a confectioner's shop, tired to death, and revolved every possible contingency. If Wohlfart were only here! But there was no time to write to him. These agents had put him off from day to day; it was only last night that they had both finally referred him to Mr. Itzig. But, though it was too late to write to Anton, might not this obliging friend have some acquaintance in the town? In recommending young Sturm, Anton had told him that the future bailiff's father was a safe man, not without substance. Perhaps he could get money from the father of a hussar now in the service of his family, if, indeed, the old man had any money. That was the question.

He turned to the Directory, and found John Sturm, porter,

Island Street, No. 17. He drove thither in a drosky. A loud "Come in" was the reply to his hurried knock. The sore-pressed officer crossed the threshold of the porter. Father Sturm sat alone with his can of beer, a small daily paper in his hand. "A hussar!" cried he, remaining seated through very astonishment. The officer, on his part, was astonished at the colossal form now contemplating him, and both were silent.

"To be sure!" said the giant. "A hussar of my Karl's regiment—the coat is the same, the epaulettes the same; you are welcome, comrade!" and he rose. Then for the first time perceiving the metal of the epaulettes, he exclaimed, "As I live, an officer!"

"My name is Eugene von Rothsattel," began the lieutenant. "I am an acquaintance of Mr. Wohlfart."

"Of Mr. Wohlfart and of my son Karl," said Sturm, eagerly; "sit down, sir; it is an exceeding pleasure and honor to me to see you." He brought out a chair, and thumped it down in his zeal so as to make the door shake again.

Eugene was going to sit down. "Not yet," said Sturm; "I will first wipe it, that the uniform take no harm. Since my Karl went away, things are a little dusty here."

He wiped and polished up the chair for his visitor. "Now, sir, allow me to sit opposite you. You bring me tidings of my little fellow?"

"Only," replied Eugene, "that he is well in health, and that my father much values his services."

"Indeed!" cried Sturm, smiling all over, and rapping on the table so as to create a small earthquake in the room. "I knew, sir, that your father the baron would be satisfied with him; I would have given him a bond for that on stamped paper. He was a clever lad, even when he was that high," indicating with his hand a degree of smallness that belongs to no human being, even in the earliest days of its visible life.

"But can he do any thing?" he anxiously inquired, "in spite of—you know what." He held out his great fingers, and made confidential signs with them. "First and middle finger—it was a great misfortune, sir."

Eugene now called to mind the unlucky accident. "He has got over it," said he, rather embarrassed at the part the paternal affections of the giant made him play. "I came here to ask a favor."

"A favor?" laughed Sturm; "ask away, young baron; that

is a simple matter. Any one from the house where my Karl is bailiff has a right to ask a favor from old Sturm. That is my view of the case."

"Well, then, Mr. Sturm, to make a long story short, I am called upon to make a heavy payment to-morrow, and I want the money for it. The debt has come upon me suddenly, and I have no time to communicate with my father. I know no one in this town to whom I can turn with so much confidence as to the father of our bailiff."

Sturm bent forward, and in his delight clapped the officer on the knee. "That was nobly said. You are a gentleman, who keeps to his own house, and does not go to strangers for what he can have from his own people. You want money? My Karl is bailiff at your father the baron's; my Karl has some money, so it is all right. How much do you want? A hundred dollars? Two hundred dollars? The money is there."

"I can hardly take courage, Mr. Sturm, to tell you the amount of the sum," said Eugene, embarrassed; "it is nineteen hundred dollars."

"Nineteen hundred dollars!" repeated the giant, in amazement; "that's a capital; that's a firm; that's what people call a fortune."

"So it is, Mr. Sturm," said Eugene, sadly. "And since you are so friendly toward me, I must own to you that I am heartily grieved that it should be so much. I am ready to give you a note of hand for it, and to pay any interest you may like."

"Do you know what," said Sturm, after some cogitation, "we will say nothing about the interest; you can settle that with my Karl; but as to the note of hand, that was a good thought of yours. A note of hand is pleasant, on account of the chances of life and death. You and I would have no need of such a thing; but I may die before my time. That would not matter, for you, who know of the transaction, would still be there. But then you might die, which, however, I have no fear of—quite the contrary; but still such a thing might be, and then my Karl ought to have your signature, so that he might come forward and say, 'My poor young master has written this, therefore pay.'"

"You will then have the kindness to lend me the money?"

"There is no kindness in it," said Sturm; "it is but my duty, as the thing is done regularly, and my dwarf is your bailiff."

Eugene was moved as he looked at the giant's laughing face. "But, Mr. Sturm, I want the money to-morrow."

"Of course," replied Sturm, "that is just what suits me. Come, baron, this way." He took up the candle, and led him into his bed-room. "Excuse things being so disorderly; but I am a lone man, and at my work all day long. Look here, this is my money-box." He drew out the iron chest. "It is safe from thieves," said he, with self-complacency, "for no one in the town can stir it but I, and no one can open it, for the lock is the masterpiece of the father of my dear departed wife. Few besides me can lift the lid, and even if many of them came, they would find it too tough a job for them; so you may believe that the money is safe here from rogues, and swindlers, and the like," said he, triumphantly. He was about to put the key into the lock. "Stop," he suddenly cried; "one word more. I trust you, baron, as I do my Karl—that of course; but just answer me this question: You really are the young baron?"

Now it was Eugene's turn to smile, and, putting his hand into his pocket, he said, "Here is my patent."

"Ah! many thanks," cried Sturm, carefully looking through the paper, and reverentially reading the names, then bowing, and giving it back with two fingers in the most respectful manner possible.

"And here," continued Eugene, "I happen to have a letter of Wohlfart's in my pocket."

"Of course," cried Sturm, looking at the address, "that is his living hand."

"And here is his signature."

"Your devoted Wohlfart," read the giant; "and if he writes that, you may be sure that it is true. So now the business is settled," said he, opening the box. "Here is the money. So, then, nineteen hundred dollars!" He took five great rolls out of the chest, held them comfortably in one hand, and gave them to Eugene. "Here are a thousand."

Eugene tried in vain to hold them.

"Just so," said the porter; "I will bring them down to the carriage. The rest I must give you in promissory notes. These are worth a little less than a hundred dollars, as of course you know."

"It does not signify," said Eugene.

"No," said the giant. "It can be mentioned in the note of hand. And now the matter is all settled." He closed the chest, and pushed it under the bed.

Eugene re-entered the little parlor with a lightened heart.

"Now, then, I will carry the money to the carriage," cried Sturm.

"The note of hand has yet to be written."

"True," nodded the giant; "we must do things in order. Just see, sir, whether you can write with my coarse pen. If I had known that I should have such a visitor, I would have brought a better one with me from Mr. Schroter's."

Eugene wrote out an acknowledgment, while Sturm sat by his can of beer, and looked at him in admiration. Then he accompanied him to the carriage, and said at leave-taking, "Greet my little lad heartily, and Mr. Wohlfart too. I have promised Karl to come to him at Christmas, on account of the Christmas-tree; but my health is no longer as good as it should be. I am forty-nine past."

A short time afterward, Eugene, writing to Anton, casually mentioned that he had borrowed nineteen hundred dollars from father Sturm on a note of hand. "Try to arrange the matter for me," said the letter; "of course my father must know nothing of it. A good-hearted, foolish fellow, that old Sturm. Think of something nice for his son the hussar—something that I can bring him when I pay you a visit."

Anton flung down the letter indignantly. "There is no helping them; the principal was right," said he. "He has squandered the money in golden bracelets for a mercenary *danseuse*, or at dice with his lawless comrades, and he now pays his usurer's bills with the hard earnings of an honest working-man."

He called Karl into his room. "I have often been sorry to have brought you into this confusion, but to-day I deeply feel how wrong it was. I am ashamed to tell you what has happened. Young Rothsattel has taken advantage of your father's good-heartedness to borrow from him nineteen hundred dollars!"

"Nineteen hundred dollars from my governor!" cried Karl. "Had my Goliath so much money to lend? He always pretended that he did not know how to economize."

"Part of your inheritance is given away in return for a worthless note of hand, and what makes it still more aggravating is the coolness of the thoughtless borrower. Have you, then, not heard of it from your father?"

"From him!" cried Karl; "I should think not. I am only sorry that you should be so vexed. I implore you not to make

any disturbance about it. You best know how many clouds hang over this house; do not increase the anxiety of these parents on my account."

"To be silent in a case like this," replied Anton, "would be to make one's self an accomplice in an unfair transaction. You must immediately write and tell your father not to be so obliging in future; the young gentleman is capable of going to him again."

Anton's next step was to write Eugene a letter of serious remonstrance, in which he pointed out to him that the only way of giving Sturm tolerably good security would be the procuring the baron's acknowledgment of his son's debt, and begged that he would lose no time in doing this.

This letter written, Anton said to Karl, "If he does not confess to his parents, I shall state the whole affair to the baron in his presence the very next day after his arrival. Don't try to dissuade me; you are just like your father."

The consequence of this communication was, that Eugene left off writing to Anton, and that his next letter to his father contained a rather unintelligible clause: "Wohlfart," he said, "was a man to whom he certainly had obligations; only the worst of that kind of people was, that they took advantage of these to adopt a dictatorial tone that was unbearable; therefore it was best civilly to shake them off."

This opinion was quite after the baron's own heart, and he warmly applauded it. "Eugene always takes the right view of the case," said he; "and I too earnestly long for the day when I shall be able to superintend the property, and to dismiss our Mr. Wohlfart."

The baroness, who had read the letter out to her husband, merely replied, "You would miss Wohlfart very much if he were to leave you."

Lenore, however, was unable to suppress her displeasure; and, leaving the room in silence, she went to look for Anton out of doors.

"What are you and Eugene differing about?" she cried, as soon as she saw him.

"Has he been complaining of me to you?" inquired Anton, in return.

"Not to me; but in his letter to my father he does not speak as he ought of one who has been so kind to him."

"Perhaps this is accidental—a fit of ill-humor that will pass off."

"No, it is more, and I will know about it."

"If it be more, you can only hear it from himself."

"Then, Wohlfart," cried Lenore, "Eugene has been doing something wrong, and you know of it."

"Be that as it may," returned Anton, gravely, "it is not my secret, else I should not withhold it from you. I pray you to believe that I have acted uprightly toward your brother."

"What I believe little signifies," cried Lenore. "I am to know nothing; I understand nothing; I can do nothing in this wretched world but grieve and fret when others are unjust to you."

"I very often," continued Anton, "feel the responsibility laid upon me by your father's indisposition a grievous burden. It is natural that he should be annoyed with me when I have to communicate unwelcome facts. This can not be avoided. I have strength, however, to brave much that is painful, so long as you and the baroness are unshaken in your conviction that I always act in your interest so far as I understand it."

"My mother knows what you are to us," said Lenore. "She never, indeed, speaks of you to me, but I can read her glance when she looks at you across the table. She has always known how to conceal her thoughts; now she does so more than ever —yes, even to me. I seem to see her pure image behind a white veil; and she is become so fragile, that often the tears rush to my eyes merely in looking at her. She always says what is kind and judicious, but she seems to have lost interest in most things; and though she smiles at what I say, I fancy that the effort gives her pain."

"Yes, just so," cried Anton, mournfully.

"She only lives to take care of my father. No one, not even her daughter, knows what she inwardly suffers. She is like an angel, Wohlfart, who lingers on our earth reluctantly. I can be but little to her, that I feel. I am not helpful, and want all that makes my mother so lovely—the self-control, the calm bearing, the enchanting manner. My father is sick—my brother thoughtless—my mother, spite of all her love, reserved toward me. Wohlfart, I am indeed alone."

She leaned on the side of the well and wept.

"Perhaps it will all be for your good," said Anton, soothingly, from the other side the well. "Yours is an energetic nature, and I believe you can feel very strongly."

"I can be very angry," chimed in Lenore through her tears, "and then very careless again."

"You grew up without a care in prosperous circumstances, and your life was easy as a game."

"My lessons were difficult enough, I am sure," remonstrated Lenore.

"I think that you were in danger of becoming a little wild and haughty in character."

"I am afraid I was so," cried Lenore.

"Now, you have had to bear heavy trials, and the present looks serious too; and if I may venture to say so, dear lady, I think you will find here just what the baroness has acquired in the great world—dignity and self-control. I often think that you are changed already."

"Was I, then, an unbearable little savage formerly?" asked Lenore, laughing in the midst of her tears, and looking at Anton with girlish archness.

He had hard work not to tell her how lovely she was at that moment; but he valiantly conquered the inclination, and said, as coolly as he could, "Not so bad as that, dear lady."

"And do you know what you are?" asked Lenore, playfully. "You are, as Eugene writes, a little schoolmaster."

"So that is what he has written!" cried Anton, enlightened.

Lenore grew grave at once. "Do not let us speak of him. As soon as I heard his letter, I came here to tell you that I trust you as I do no one on earth, if it be not my mother; that I shall always trust you as long as I live; that nothing could shake my faith in you; that you are the only friend that we have in our adversity; and that I could ask your pardon on my knees when any one offends you in word or even thought."

"Lenore, dear lady," cried Anton, joyously, "say no more."

"I will say," continued Lenore, "how I admire the self-possession with which you follow your own way and manage the people, and that it is you alone who keep any order on the estate, or can bring it into a better condition. This has been upon my mind to say; and now, Wohlfart, you know it."

"I thank you, lady," cried Anton; "such words make this a happy day. But I am not so self-possessed and efficient as you think, and every day I feel more and more that I am not the person to be really of service here. If I ever wish that you were not the baron's daughter, but his son, it is when I go over this property."

"Yes," said Lenore, "that is just the old regret. Our former bailiff used often to say the same. When I sit over my work, and see you and Mr. Sturm go out together, I get so hot,

and I throw my useless frame aside. I can only spend, and understand nothing but buying lace; and even that I don't understand well, according to mamma. However, you must put up with the stupid Lenore as your good friend;" and she gave him her own true-hearted smile.

"It is now many years since I have, in my inmost soul, felt your friendship to be a great blessing," cried Anton, much moved. "It has always, up to this very hour, been one of my heart's best joys secretly to feel myself your faithful friend."

"And so it shall ever be between us," said Lenore. "Now I am comfortable again. And do not plague yourself any more about Eugene's foolish ways. Even I am not going to do so."

Thus they parted like innocent children who find a pleasure in saying to each other all that the passion of love would teach to conceal.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The enmity between Pix and Specht raged fiercely as ever. Now, however, Specht stood no longer alone; the quartette was on his side; for Specht was wounded in feelings that the quartette respected, and often celebrated in song. Mr. Specht was in love. Certainly this was nothing new to his excitable nature; on the contrary, his love was eternal, though its object often changed. Every lady of his acquaintance had, in her turn, been worshiped by him. Even the elderly cousin had been for a time the subject of his dreams.

On this occasion, however, Mr. Specht's love had some solid foundation. He had discovered a young woman, a well-to-do householder, the widow of a fur-merchant, with a round face and a pleasant pair of nut-brown eyes. He followed her to the theatre and in the public gardens, walked past her windows as often as he could, and did all that in him lay to win her heart.

He disturbed the quiet of her bereaved life by showers of anonymous notes, in which he threatened to quit this sublunary scene if she despised him. In the list of advertisements, among fresh caviare, shell-fish, and servants wanting places, there appeared, to the astonishment of the public, numerous poetical effusions, where Adèle, the name of the widow, was made prominent either in an acrostic, or else by its component

letters being printed in large capitals. At length Specht had not been able to resist taking the quartette into his confidence on the subject. The two basses were amazed at such poetical efforts having proceeded from their office. True, they had often ridiculed them with others, while Specht inwardly groaned over counting-house criticism; but now that they knew one of themselves to have been the perpetrator, the *esprit de corps* awoke, and they not only received his confessions kindly, but lent him their assistance in bribing the watchman in the widow's street, and serenading her, on which occasion a window had been seen to open, and something white to appear for a few minutes. Specht was now at the summit of earthly felicity, and as that condition is not a reticent one, he imprudently extended his confidence to others of his colleagues, and so it was that the matter came to the ears of Pix.

And now there began in the local advertiser a most extraordinary game of hide-and-seek. There were numerous insertions appointing a Mr. S. to a rendezvous with one dear to him in every possible part of the town. Wherever the place, Specht regularly repaired to it, and never found her whom he sought, but suffered from every variety of weather, was repulsed by stranger ladies, and had the end of a cigar thrown into his face by a shoemaker's apprentice, whom he mistook for his fair one in disguise. Of course he, on his side, gave vent, through the same medium, to his complaints and reproaches, which led to excuses and new appointments. But he never met the long-sought-for one.

This went on for some weeks, and Specht fell into a state of excitement which even the basses found reprehensible.

One morning Pix was standing as usual on the ground floor, when a plump, pretty lady, with nut-brown eyes, and enveloped in beautiful furs, entered the house, and in an irate tone of voice inquired for Mr. Schröter.

Pix informed her that he was not then at home, adding, with the air and tone of a field-marshal, that he was his representative.

After some reluctance to tell her tale to any other than Mr. Schröter had been overcome by the polite decision of Mr. Pix, the lady preferred her complaint against one of the clerks in that office who persecuted her with letters and poems, and unworthily made her name public in the daily papers.

The whole thing flashed upon Pix at once. "Can you give me the gentleman's name?"

"I do not know his name," said the widow; "he is tall and has curly hair."

"Gaunt in figure and a large nose, eh?" inquired Pix. "Very well, madam; from this day forth you shall have no further annoyance. I will be answerable for that."

"Still," recommenced the lady in the furs, "I should wish Mr. Schröter himself—"

"Better not, madam. The young man has behaved toward you in a manner for which I can find no adequate terms. Yet your kind heart will remember that he did not mean to offend. He wanted sense and tact, that was his offense. But he was really in earnest; and since I have had the honor to know you, I find it natural." He bowed. "I condemn him, as I said before, but I find it natural."

The pretty widow stood there embarrassed, and Pix proceeded to say that her forgiveness would be a source of happiness to the whole establishment.

"I never meant to make the establishment responsible for the ungentlemanlike behavior of one of its members."

"I thank you with my whole heart for your gracious conduct," said Pix, triumphantly, and then skillfully proceeded to lead the conversation to the goods with which they were surrounded, pointing out the peculiarities of different coffees, and stating that, although the firm had left off retail dealings, yet that in her case they would, at any time, be much flattered to receive an order, however small, and to furnish her with the articles required at wholesale prices.

The lady expressed her gratitude, and went away reconciled to the firm.

Pix went into the office, and calling Specht aside, severely remonstrated with him. Specht was at first speechless with terror. "She began in the daily papers," cried he, at length; "she first appointed the theatre, then the promenade, then the tower to see the view, then—"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Pix, with virtuous indignation; "don't you see that some scapegrace or other has been making a fool of you? The lady has been rendered very unhappy by your conduct."

Specht wrung his hands.

"I have done all I could to set her mind at rest, and have promised that you shall never again intrude upon her in any one way; so mind what you are about, or Mr. Schröter shall hear the whole story."

While Specht, suffering inexpressibly, took counsel with his musical friends, Pix acted. A porter carried an immense packet to the widow's house that very evening, which Pix scrupulously charged to his own account. That same evening he called to announce Specht's penitence, and promises of never offending again. The following Sunday he took coffee at the lady's house, and four weeks after he made her a proposal. This was accepted, and Mr. Pix determined, in spite of moths and other hinderances, to give a fresh impulse to the fur-trade, and to become its centre.

To his honor be it said, he felt bound to communicate the fact to Specht before any one else, and to vouchsafe him a few words of consolation. "Fate has so willed it; be rational, Specht, and make up your mind. After all, it is one of your colleagues who is getting married; take my advice, and fall in love as fast as you can with some one else. It will give you no trouble at all."

"So you think," cried Specht, in despair.

"I assure you it will not, if you set about it in earnest. We will remain good friends; you shall be my groom's-man, and you will soon find another whose name will rhyme quite as well as Adèle."

This consolation, however, proved unavailing at the time, and Specht, indignant at the treachery of his opponent, enjoyed at least the monrnful satisfaction of having the whole counting-house on his side, and hearing Pix universally condemned as a hard-hearted, selfish fellow. But time gradually poured its balsam into his heart; and the widow happening to have a niece whose eyes were blue and whose hair was golden, Specht began by finding her youth interesting, then her manners attractive, till one day he returned to his own room fully resolved to be the nephew-in-law of Mr. Pix.

The merchant sat one evening in his arm-chair, and seemed absorbed in his own thoughts. At last, turning to his sister, he said, "Fink has disappeared again."

Sabine let her work fall. "Disappeared! In America!"

"An agent of his father's was in our counting-house to-day. According to what he told me, there has been a fresh difference between Fink and his father, and this time I fear Fink is more in the right of it than the firm. He has suddenly given up the management of its affairs, has broken up by his strong measures a great company founded by his uncle, has renounced his claim upon his inheritance, and has disappeared.

The uncertain reports that have come from New York say that he has gone to the prairies of the interior."

Sabine listened with intense interest, but she said not a word. Her brother, too, was silent a while. "After all, there were noble elements in his character," said he, at length. "The present time requires energy and strength like his. Pix, too, is leaving us. He is to marry a widow with means, and to set up for himself. I shall give his post to Balbus, but he will not replace him."

"No," said Sabine, anxiously.

"This house is growing empty," continued her brother, "and I feel that my strength is failing. These last years have been heavy ones. We get accustomed to the faces, even to the weaknesses of our fellow-men. No one thinks how bitter it often is to the head of a firm to sever the tie that binds him to his coadjutors; and I was more used to Pix than to most men: it is a great blow to me to lose him. And I am growing old. I am growing old, and our house empty. You alone are left to me at this gloomy time; and when I am called upon to leave you, you will remain behind me desolate. My wife and my child are gone; I have been setting my whole hopes upon your blooming youth; I have thought of your husband and your children, my poor darling; but meanwhile I have grown old, and I see you at my side with a cheerful smile and a wounded heart—active, sympathizing, but alone; without great joys and without happy hopes."

Sabine laid her head on her brother's shoulder, and wept silently. "One of those whom you have lost was dear to you," said she, gently.

"Do not speak or think of him," replied her brother, darkly. "Even if he returned from thence he would be lost to us." He passed his hand over her head, took up his hat, and left the room.

"Yet he himself is always thinking of Wohlfart," cried the cousin from her window-niche. "This very day he was cross-examining old Sturm about Karl and the property. I declare I don't understand the man."

"*I* understand him," sighed Sabine, and sat down again to her work. The cousin pouted: "You and he are just alike; there is no speaking to you on certain subjects." And she left the room.

Sabine left the room. The fire crackled in the stove, the pendulum of the clock swung backward and forward monoto-

nously. "Ever so! ever so!" it seemed to say. Those pictures of her parents had been looking calmly down upon her, their last child, for many years. Her youth was passing away silent, serious, still as those painted forms. Sabine bowed her head and listened. Hush! little fairy steps in the corner of the room. Hark again! a merry laugh from a child's lip, and the steps tripped nearer, and a curly head was laid on her knee, and two little arms stretched out lovingly to clasp her neck. She bent down and kissed the air, and listened again to those blessed sounds which swelled her heart with rapture, and brought tears of joy to her eyes. Alas! she but grasped at empty air, and nothing was real but the tears that fell into her lap.

So sat she long till twilight closed in. The vibrations of the pendulum seemed to fail, the fire grew low in the stove, the pictures dim on the walls, the room dark and lonely.

At that moment old Sturm's hammer was heard outside. Every stroke fell strong, vigorous, decided. It sounded through court-yard and house. Sabine rose: "So it shall be," cried she. "I have twice hoped and feared, twice it has been an illusion, now it is over. My life is to be devoted to him to whom I am all. I can not bring to him the husband he hoped for, and no band of children will twine their arms about his neck. Yes, things will go on with us as they have done hitherto, always more silent, always more empty. But me shall he have, and my whole life. My brother, thou shalt never again feel with regret that thy life and mine are wanting in joyousness!"

She caught up her little key-basket, and hurried into her brother's room. Meanwhile the cousin was making up her mind to pay Mr. Baumann a visit.

Between the cousin and Mr. Baumann there had long been a silent understanding, and fate now willed that he should be her neighbor at the dinner-table. When the cousin glanced back over her succession of neighbors, she came to the conclusion that they had lost in sprightliness what they had gained in moral worth. Fink was rather profane, but very amusing; Anton had a certain equipoise of goodness and pleasantness; Baumann was the best of them all, but also the most silent. Her conversation with him, though edifying enough, was never exciting. On Mondays, indeed, they had a mutual interest in discussing the Sunday's sermon, but there was another tie between them, and that was Anton.

The good lady could not account for what she called his unnatural departure. Whether the fault was that of the principal or the clerk, she could not take upon herself to decide, but she was firmly convinced that the step was unnecessary, unwise, and injurious to all parties; and she had done all toward bringing the wanderer back into the firm that tender hints and feminine persuasions can do to counteract manly perversity. When first Anton left, she had taken every opportunity of mentioning and praising him, both to the merchant and to Sabine; but she met with no encouragement. The merchant always answered dryly, sometimes rudely, and Sabine invariably turned the subject or was silent. The cousin was not, however, to be taken in by that. Those embroidered curtains had let in a flood of light upon her mind, in which Sabine stood plainly revealed to her gaze. She knew that Mr. Baumann was the only one of his colleagues with whom Anton kept up a correspondence, and to-day she resolved to call him to her aid; therefore she took up the report of a benevolent society lent her by the future missionary, and, knocking at Mr. Baumann's door, handed it in to him. "Very good," said she, on the threshold; "Heaven will bless such a cause. Pray set me down as a subscriber for the future." Mr. Baumann thanked her in the name of the poor. The cousin went on. "What do you hear of late from your friend Wohlfart? He seems to have vanished from the face of the earth; even old Sturm has nothing to say about him."

"He has a great deal to do," said the reticent Baumann.

"Nay, I should think not more than here. If occupation was all he wanted, he might have remained where he was."

"He has a difficult task to perform, and is doing a good work where he is," cautiously continued Mr. Baumann.

"Don't talk to me of your good work," cried the cousin, entering, in her excitement, and closing the door behind her. "He had a good work to do here too. I beg your pardon, but really I never knew such a thing in all my life. He runs away just when he was most wanted. And no excuse for it either. If he had married or set up for himself, that would have been a different thing, for a man likes a business and a household of his own. That would have been God's will, and I should not have said a word against it. But to run off from the counting-house after sheep and cows, and noblemen's families and Poles, when he was made so much of, and was such a favorite here! Do you know what I call that, Mr.

Baumann?" said she, the bows on her cap shaking with her eagerness; "I call that ungrateful. And what are we to do here? This house is getting quite desolate. Fink gone, Jordan gone, Wohlfart gone, Pix gone—you are almost the only one remaining of the old set, and you can't do every thing."

"No," said Baumann, embarrassed; "and I, too, am very awkwardly placed. I had fixed last autumn as the term of my stay here, and now spring is coming on, and I have not followed the voice that calls me."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried the cousin, in horror, "you are not going away too?"

"I must," said Baumann, looking down; "I have had letters from my English brethren; they blame my lukewarmness. I fear I have done very wrong in not leaving you before; but when I looked at the heaps of letters, and Mr. Schröter's anxious face, and thought what hard times these were, and that the house had lost most of its best hands, I was withheld. I too wish that Wohlfart would return; he is wanted here."

"He must return," cried the cousin; "it is his Christian duty. Write and tell him so. Certainly we are not very cheerful here," said she, confidentially; "he may have a pleasanter time of it yonder. The Poles are a merry, riotous set."

"Alas!" replied Mr. Baumann, in the same confidential tone, "he does not lead a merry life. I am afraid he has a hard time of it there; his letters are by no means cheerful."

"You don't say so!" said the cousin, taking a chair.

Baumann drew his near her and went on.

"He writes anxiously; he takes a gloomy view of the times, and fears fresh disturbances."

"God forbid!" cried the good woman; "we have had enough of them."

"He lives in an unsettled district, with bad men around, and the police regulations seem to be quite inadequate."

"There are fearful dens of robbers there," chimed in the excited cousin.

"And I fear, too, that his earnings are but small. At first I sent him a few trifles to which he is accustomed, such as tea and cigars, but in his last letter he told me he was going to be economical, and to leave them off. He must have very little money," continued Baumann, shaking his head; "not more than two hundred dollars."

"He is in want," cried the cousin; "actually he is. Poor Wohlfart! When you next write, we will send him a chest of the Pekoe tea, and a couple of our hams."

"Hams to the country! I fancy there are more swine there than any thing else."

"But they don't belong to him," cried she. "Listen to me, Mr. Baumann; it is your Christian duty to write to him at once, and tell him to return. The business wants him. I have the best reasons to know how much my cousin Schröter is silently feeling the loss of his best coadjutors, and how much he would rejoice to see Wohlfart back again."

This was a pious fraud of the good lady's.

"It does not appear so to me," interpolated Baumann.

"It was only to-day that my cousin Sabine said to her brother how dear Wohlfart had been to us all, and how great a loss he was. If he has duties yonder, he has duties here too, and these are the oldest."

"I will write to him," said Mr. Baumann; "but I fear, honored lady, that it will be to no purpose, for, now that he himself is a loser by it, he will never look back from the plow to which, for the sake of others, he has put his hand."

"He does not belong to the plow, but to the pen," cried the cousin, irritably, "and his place lies here. And because he gets a good name here, and drinks his tea comfortably, he does his duty none the less. And I tell you, too, Mr. Baumann, that I beg never to hear again of your African notions."

Baumann smiled proudly. However, as soon as the cousin had left the room, he obediently sat down and wrote off the whole conversation to Anton.

The snow had melted away from the Polish estate, the brook had swollen to a flood, the landscape still lay silent and colorless, but the sap began to circulate in the branches, and the buds on the bushes to appear. The ruinous bridge had been carried away by the winter torrents, and Anton was now superintending the building of a new one. Lenore sat opposite him, and watched his measurements. "The winter is over," cried she; "spring is coming. I can already picture to myself green grass and trees, and even the gloomy castle will look more cheerful in the bright spring sunshine than it does now. But I will sketch it for you just as it is, and it shall remind you of the first winter that we spent here under your protection."

And Anton looked with shining eyes at the beautiful girl before him, and, with the pencil in his hand, sketched her profile on a new board. "You won't succeed," said Lenore; "you always make my mouth too large and my eyes too small.

Give me the pencil; I can do better. Stand still. Look! that is your face—your good, true face; I know it by heart. Hurrah! the postman!" cried she, throwing away the pencil and hurrying to the castle. Anton followed her; for the postman and his heavy bag were to the castle as a ship steering through the sandy deep, and bringing the world's good things to the dwellers on a lonely island. The man was soon relieved from his burden. Lenore gladly caught up the drawing-paper that she had ordered from Rosmin. "Come, Wohlfart, we will look out the best place for sketching the castle, and you shall hang up the picture in your room instead of the old one, which saddens me whenever I see it. Once you sketched our home, now I will sketch it for you. I will take great pains, and you shall see what I can do."

She had spoken joyously, but Anton had not heard a word she said. He had torn open Baumann's letter, and as he read it his face reddened with emotion. Slowly, thoughtfully, he turned away, went up to his room, and came down no more. Lenore snatched up the envelope, which he had dropped. "Another letter from his friend in the firm!" said she, sadly; "whenever he hears from him, he becomes gloomy and cold toward me." She threw away the envelope, and hurried to the stable to saddle her trusty friend the pony.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was the weekly market in the little town of Rosmin. From time immemorial this had been an important festival to the country people around.

For five days of the week the peasant had to cultivate his plot of ground, or to render feudal service to his landlord, and on Sunday his heart was divided between the worship of the Virgin, his family, and the public house; but the market-day led him beyond the narrow confines of his fields into the busy world. There, amid strangers, he could feel and show himself a shrewd man in buying and selling; he greeted acquaintances whom else he would never have met; saw new things and strange people, and heard the news of other towns and districts. So it had been even when the Slavonic race alone possessed the soil. Then the site where Rosmin now stands was an open field, with perhaps a chapel or a few old trees,

and the house of some sagacious landed proprietor, who saw farther than the rest of his long-bearded countrymen. At that time the German peddler used to cross the border with his wagon and his attendants, and to display his stores under the protection of a crucifix or of a drawn Slavonic sword. These stores consisted of gay handkerchiefs, stockings, necklaces of glass and coral, pictures of saints and ecclesiastical decorations, which were given in exchange for the produce of the district—wolf-skins, honey, cattle, and corn. In course of time the handicraftsman followed the peddler, the German shoemaker, the tinsmith, and the saddler established themselves; the tents changed into strongly-built houses that stood around the market-place. The foreign settlers bought land, bought privileges from the original lords of the soil, and copied in their statutes those of German towns in general. In the woods and on the commons round, it was told with wonder how rapidly those men of a foreign tongue had grown up into a large community, and how every peasant who passed through their gate must pay toll; nay, that even the nobleman, all-powerful as he was, must pay it as well. Several of the Poles around joined lots with the citizens, and settled among them as mechanics or shopkeepers. This had been the origin of Rosmin, as of many other German towns on foreign soil, and these have remained what at first they were, the markets of the great plains, where Polish produce is still exchanged for the inventions of German industry, and the poor field-laborer brought into contact with other men, with culture, liberty, and a civilized state.

As we have before said, the market-day at Rosmin is a great day still. From early dawn hundreds of basket-carriages, filled with field-produce, move on toward the town, but the serf no longer whips on the used-up chargers of his master, but his own sturdy horse of German breed. And when the light carriage of a nobleman rolls by, the peasant urges his horse to a sharper trot, and only slightly touches his hat. Every where they are moving on toward the town: the children are driving their geese thither, and the women carrying their butter, fruit, and mushrooms, and, carefully concealed, a hare or two that has fallen a victim to their husbands' guns. Numbers of carts stand at the door of every inn, and crowds are pushing in and out of every drinking-shop. In the market-place the corn-wagons are closely ranged, and the whole wide space covered with well-filled sacks, and horses of every

size and color; and a few brokers are winding their way, like so many eels, among the crowd, with samples of grain in each pocket, asking and answering in two languages at once. Amid the white smock frocks of the Poles, and their hats adorned with a peacock's feather, the dark blue of the German colonists appears, together with soldiers from the next garrison, townspeople, agriculturists, and fine youths, sons of the nobility. You may see the gendarme yonder at the corner of the square, towering high on his tall horse; he, too, is excited to-day, and his voice sounds authoritatively above all the confusion of the carts that have stopped up the way. Every where the shops are opened wide, and small dealers spread out their wares on tables and barrels in front of the houses; there the bargains are deliberately made, and the enjoyment of shopping is keenly felt. The last purchase over, the next move is into the tavern. There, cheeks get redder, gestures more animated, voices louder, friends embrace, or old foes try hard to pick a quarrel. Meanwhile men of business have to make the most of this day, when actions are brought and taxes paid. Now it is that Mr. Löwenberg drives his best bargains, not only in swine, but in cows and wool; besides which, he lends money, and is the trusted agent of many a landed proprietor. So passes the market-day, in ceaseless talking and enjoyment, earning and spending, rolling of carts and galloping of horses, till evening closes in, and the housewife pulls her husband by the coat, remembering that the earthen mugs he carries are easily broken, and that the little children at home are beginning to cry out for their mother. Such has ever been the weekly market in the town of Rosmin.

During the last winter the numbers attending it had not decreased, but there was a degree of restlessness to be observed in many, particularly in the gentry of the district. Strangers of military appearance often entered the principal wine-shop, and went into the back room, of which the door was at once shut. Youths wearing square red caps, and peculiarly attired, walked in and out among the crowd, tapping one peasant on the shoulder, calling another by name, and taking them into a corner apart.

Wherever a soldier appeared, he was looked at as a character in a masquerade; many avoided him; many, Germans and Poles alike, made more of him than ever. In the taverns, the people from the German villages sat apart, and the Poles on Herr von Tarow's estate drank and bought more

than they were wont to do. The tenant of the new farm had been unable, last market-day, to find a new scythe any where in the town, and the forester had complained to Anton that he could not in any shop get powder enough to last him more than a week. Something was in the wind, but no one would say what it was.

It was market-day again at Rosmin, and Anton drove thither, accompanied by a servant. It was one of the first spring days, and the sun shone brightly, reminding him how gay the gardens must now be with early flowers, and that he and the ladies in the castle would see none this year, save a few, perhaps, from the little farm garden behind the barn. But, indeed, it was no time to care much for flowers; every where men's hearts were restless and excited, and much that had stood firm for years now seemed to totter. A political hurricane was blowing over wide districts; every day the newspapers related something unexpected and alarming; a time of commotion and universal insecurity seemed impending. Anton thought of the baron's circumstances, and what a misfortune it would be to him should land fall in value, and money rise. He thought of the firm, of the place in the office which he secretly still considered his own, and of the letter written by Mr. Baumann, telling him how gloomy the principal looked, and how quarrelsome the clerks had become.

He was roused out of his sorrowful reverie by a noise on the road. A number of gentlemen's carriages drove past him, Herr von Tarowski occupying the first, and politely bowing as he passed. Anton was surprised to see that his huntsman sat on the box as if they were going to the chase. Three other carriages followed, heavily laden with gentlemen; and behind came a whole troop of mounted men, Von Tarow's German steward among them.

"Jasch," cried Anton to the servant who drove him, "what was it that the gentlemen in the second carriage were so careful to hide as they drove by?"

"Guns," said Jasch, shaking his head.

This sunny day, after so long a period of snow and rain, naturally attracted people from all sides of the town. Parties of them hurried forward, but few women were among them, and there was a degree of excitement and animation prevailing that was in general only displayed when returning in the evening. Anton halted at the first public house on the way, and told the driver to remain there with the horses.

He himself walked rapidly on through the gate. The town was so crowded that the carts of grain could hardly make their way along. When Anton reached the market-place he was struck with the scene before him. On all sides heated faces, eager gestures, not a few in hunting costume, and a strange cockade on numerous caps. The crowd was densest before the wine-merchant's store; there the people trode on one another, staring up at the windows, from whence hung gayly-colored flags, the Polish colors above the rest. While Anton was looking with disquietude at the front of the house, the door was opened, and Herr von Tarow came out upon the stone steps, accompanied by a stranger with a scarf bound round him, in whom Anton recognized the same Pole who had once threatened him with a court-martial, and who had been inquiring for the steward a few months ago. A young man sprang out of the crowd on to the lowest step, saying something in Polish, and waving his hat. A loud shout rose in return, and then came a profound silence, during which Von Tarow spoke a few words, the import of which Anton could not catch, owing to the noise of carts and the pushing of the crowd. Next, the gentleman with the scarf made a long oration, during which he was often interrupted by loud applause. At the end of it, a deafening tumult arose. The house door was thrown wide open, and the crowd swayed to and fro like the waves of the sea, some rushing off in another direction, and others running into the house, whence they hurried back with cockades on their caps and scythes in their hands. The number of the armed went on rapidly increasing, and small detachments of scythe-bearers, headed by men with guns, proceeded to invest the market-place.

Hearing the word of command given behind him, Anton turned, and saw a few men mounted and armed, who were ordering all the wagons to be removed from the market-place. The noise and confusion increased, the peasants dragging off their horses in all haste, the traders flying into the houses with their stores, the shops being gradually closed. The market-place soon presented an ominous appearance. Anton was now swept off by the crowd to its opposite side, where the custom-house stood, made conspicuous from afar by the national escutcheon suspended near the windows. That was now the point of attraction, and Anton saw from a distance a man plant a ladder against the wall, and hack away at the escutcheon till, amid profound silence, it fell to the ground.

Soon, however a drunken rabble fell upon it with wild yells, and, tying a rope about it, ignominiously dragged it through the gutter and over the stones.

Anton was beside himself. "Wretches!" cried he, running toward the offenders. But a strong arm was thrown around him, and a broken voice said, "Stop, Mr. Wohlfart, this is their day; to-morrow will be ours." Dashing away the unwelcome restraint, Anton saw the portly form of the Neudorf bailiff, and found himself surrounded by a number of dark-looking figures. These were the blue-coated German farmers, their faces full of grief and anger. "Let me go!" cried Anton, in a phrensy. But again the heavy hand of the bailiff was laid on his shoulder, and tears were in the man's eyes as he said, "Spare your life, Mr. Wohlfart; it is all in vain; we have nothing but our fists, and we are the minority." And, on the other side, his hand was grasped as if in a vice by the old forester, who stood there groaning and sobbing: "That ever I should live to see this day! Oh, the shame, the shame!" Again there rose a yell nearer them, and a voice cried, "Search the Germans; take their arms from them; let no one leave the market-place!" Anton looked round him hastily. "This we will not stand, friends, to be trapped here in a German town, and to have our escutcheon outraged by those miscreants."

A drum was heard at a distance. "It is the drum of the guard," cried the bailiff; "the town militia are assembling: they have arms."

"Perhaps all may not be lost yet," cried Anton; "I know a few men who are to be relied upon. Compose yourself, old friend," said he to the forester. "The Germans from the country must be enlisted; no one knows yet what we can do. We will, at all events, disperse in different directions, and reassemble at the fountain here. Let each go and call his acquaintances together. No time is to be lost. You go in that direction, bailiff; you, smith of Kunau, come with me." They divided; and Anton, followed by the forester and the smith, went once more round the market-place. Wherever they met a German there was a glance, a hurried hand-clasp, a whispered word—"The Germans assemble at the fountain;" and these spirited up the irresolute to join their countrymen.

Anton and his companions paused for a moment in the midst of the dense crowd around the wine-merchant's. About fifty men with scythes stood before the house, near them a

dozen more with guns; the doors were still open, and people were still going in to get arms. Some young gentlemen were addressing the crowd, but Anton remarked that the Polish peasants did not keep their ranks, and looked doubtfully at each other. While the forester and the smith were giving the sign to the Germans, of whom many were assembled, Anton rushed up to a little man in working garments, and, seizing him by the arm, said, "Locksmith Grobesch, you standing here? Why do you not hasten to our meeting-place? You a citizen and one of the militia, will you put up with this insult?"

"Alas! Mr. Agent," said the locksmith, taking Anton apart, "what a misfortune! Only think, I was hammering away in my workshop, and heard nothing of what was going on. One can't hear much at our work. Then my wife ran in—"

"Are you going to put up with this insult?" cried Anton, shaking him violently.

"God forbid, Mr. Wohlfart; I head a band of militia. While my wife looked out my coat, I just ran over the way to see how many of them there were. You are taller than I; how many are there carrying arms?"

"I count fifty scythes," replied Anton, hurriedly.

"It is not the scythes; they are a cowardly set; how many guns are there?"

"A dozen before the door, and perhaps as many more in the house."

"We have about thirty rifles," said the little man, anxiously, "but we can't count upon them all to-day."

"Can you get us arms?" asked Anton.

"But few," said the locksmith, shaking his head.

"There is a band of us Germans from the country," said Anton, rapidly; "we will fight our way into the suburb as far as the Red Deer Inn, and there I will keep the people together, and, for God's sake, send us a patrol to report the state of things, and the number of arms you can procure. If we can eject the nobles, the others will run away at once."

"But then the revenge these Poles will take!" said the locksmith. "The town will have to pay for it."

"No such thing, my man. The military can be sent for to-morrow, if you but help to eject these madmen to-day. Off with you; each moment increases the danger."

He drove the little man away, and hurried back to the fountain. There the Germans were assembled in small groups,

and the Neudorf bailiff came to meet him, crying, "There's no time to lose; the others are beginning to notice us; there is a party of scythes forming yonder against us."

"Follow me!" cried Anton, in a loud voice; "draw close; forward! let's leave the town."

The forester sprang from side to side, marshaling the men; Anton and the bailiff led the way. As they reached the corner of the market-place, scythes were crossed; and the leader of the party cocked his gun, and said theatrically, "Why do you wish to leave, my fine sir? Take arms, ye people; to-day is the day of liberty!"

He said no more, for the forester, springing forward, gave him such an astounding box on the ear that he reeled and fell, his gun dropping from his hand. A loud cry arose; the forester caught up the gun, and the scythe-bearers, taken by surprise, were dashed aside, their scythes taken from them, and broken on the pavement. Thus the German band reached the gates, and there, too, the enemy yielded, and the dense mass passed on unmolested till they reached the inn appointed. There the bailiff, urged on by Anton, addressed the people:

"There is a plot against the government. There is a plot against us Germans. Our armed enemies are few, and we have just seen that we can manage them. Let every orderly man remain here, and help the citizens to drive out the strangers. The town militia will send us word how we can best do this, therefore remain together, countrymen!"

At these words, many cried "We will! we will!" but many, too, grew fearful, and stole away home. Those who remained looked out for arms as best they could, taking up pitchforks, bars of iron, wooden cudgels, or whatever else lay ready to hand.

"I came here to buy powder and shot," said the forester to Anton. "Now I have a gun, and I will fire my very last charge, if we can only revenge the insult they have offered to our eagle."

Meanwhile the hours passed as usual at the castle, and it was now about noon. The baron, accompanied by his wife, walked in the sunshine, grumbling because the molehills against which his foot tripped were not yet leveled. This led him to the conclusion that there was no reliance to be placed upon hired dependents of any kind, and that Wohlfart was the most forgetful of his class. On this theme he enlarged with a kind of gloomy satisfaction, the baroness only contradicting

him as far as she could without putting him out of temper. At last he sat down on a chair that one of the servants carried after him, and quietly listened to his daughter, who was discussing with Karl the best site for a small plantation. No one thought of mischief, and each one was occupied with things immediately around him.

Then came the rumor of some great disaster, flying on wings of evil omen over the wide plain. It swooped down on the baron's oasis, heavily fluttered over pines and wild pear-trees, corn-fields and meadows, till it reached the castle. At first it was indistinct, like a little cloud on a sunny sky; but soon it grew, it darkened the air, it brooded with its black pinions over all hearts—it made the blood stand still in the veins, and filled the eyes with burning tears.

In the middle of his work, Karl suddenly looked up, and said in dismay, "That was a shot."

Lenore started, then laughed at her own terror. "I did not hear it," said she; "perhaps it was the forester."

"The forester is gone to town," replied Karl, gravely.

"Then it is some confounded poacher in the wood," cried the baron, angrily.

"It was a cannon shot," maintained the positive Karl.

"That is impossible," said the baron; but he himself listened with intense attention; "there are no cannon for many miles round."

The next moment a voice sounded out from the farm-yard, "There is a fire in Rosmin."

Karl looked at his young lady, threw down his spade, and ran toward the farm-yard. Lenore followed him.

"Who said that there was a fire in Rosmin?" he inquired. Not one would own that he had, but all ran in dismay to the high road, though the town was six miles off, and no view of it was to be had from thence.

"Many scared women have been running along toward Neudorf," said one servant; and another added, "There must be mischief going on in Rosmin, for we can see the smoke rise above the wood." All thought, indeed, that they did perceive a dark cloud in that direction, Karl as well as the rest.

"The nobles are all there to-day," cried one. "They have set the town on fire." Another professed to have heard from a man in the fields that this was to be a serious day for landed proprietors; then, looking askance at Karl, he added, "Many things may yet happen before evening." Next came the land-

lord, exclaiming, "If this day were but over!" and Karl returned, "Would that it were!" yet no one knew exactly why.

From that hour, fresh messengers of ill succeeded each other. "The soldiers and the Poles are fighting," said one. "Kunau is on fire too," cried some women who had been working in the fields. At last came the farmer's wife, running up to Lenore. "My husband sends me because he won't leave the farm on a day like this. He wishes to know whether you have any tidings of the forester; there is murder going on in the town, and people say the forester is shooting away in the midst of it all."

"Who says so?" asked the baron.

"One who came running across the fields told it to my husband; and it must be true that there is an uproar in the town, for when the forester went thither he had no gun."

Thus the dark rumor spread. Karl had much difficulty in getting the men out again to their plowing. Lenore meantime went up to the tower with him, but they could not be positive whether or not there was smoke in the direction of Rosmin. They had scarcely got down, when one of the farmer's servants came back with his horses to say that a man from the next district had told him, as he galloped past, that Rosmin was filled with men bearing red flags, and armed with scythes; and that all the Germans in the country were to be shot. The baroness wrung her hands and began to weep, and her husband lost all the self-command he had sought to exercise. He burst out into loud complaints against Wohlfart for not being on the spot on a day like this, and gave Karl a dozen contradictory orders in quick succession. Lenore could not endure her suspense within the castle walls, but kept as much as she could with Karl, in whose trusty face she found more comfort than in any thing else. Both looked constantly along the high road to see if a carriage or a messenger were coming.

"He is peaceable," said she to Karl, hoping for confirmation from him. "Surely he would never expose himself to such fearful risk."

But Karl shook his head. "There is no trusting to that. If things in the town are as people say, Mr. Anton will not be the last to take a hand in them. He will not think of himself."

"No, that he will not," cried Lenore, wringing her hands.

So the day passed. Karl sternly insisted upon keeping all the servants together, he himself shouldering his carbine, not

knowing why, and saddling a horse to tie it up again in the stable. At evening the landlord came running to the castle, accompanied by a servant from the distillery. As soon as he saw the young lady, the good-natured man called out, "Here are tidings, dreadful tidings, of Mr. Wohlfart."

Lenore ran forward, and the servant began to give a confused report of the horrors of the day in Rosmin. He had seen the Poles and Germans about to fire at each other in the market-place, and Anton was marching at the head of the latter.

"I knew that," cried Karl, proudly.

The servant went on to say that he had run off just as all the Poles had taken aim at the gentleman. Whether he were alive or dead, he could not exactly say, owing to his terror at the time, but he fully believed that the gentleman must be dead.

Lenore leaned against the wall, Karl tore his hair in distraction. "Saddle the pony," said Lenore, in a smothered voice.

"You are not thinking of going yourself at night through the wood all the way to the town?" cried Karl.

The brave girl hurried toward the stable without answering him; Karl barred the way. "You must not. The baroness would die with anxiety about you, and what could you do among those raging men yonder?"

Lenore stood still. "Then go for him," said she, half unconscious; "bring him to us, alive or dead."

"Can I leave you alone on a day like this?" cried Karl, beside himself.

Lenore snatched his carbine from him. "Go, if you love him. I will mount guard in your stead."

Karl rushed to the farm-yard, got out his horse, and galloped off along the Rosmin road. The sound of the horse's hoofs soon died away, and all was still. Lenore paced up and down before the castle walls; her friend was in mortal peril, perhaps lost; and the fault was hers, for she had brought him hither. She called to mind in her despair all that he had been to her and to her parents. To live on in this solitude without him seemed impossible. Her mother sent for her, her father called to her out of the window, but she paid no attention. Every other feeling was merged in the realization of the pure and sincere attachment that had existed between her and him she had lost.

To return to Rosmin, Anton and his party had remained for about half an hour in expectation before the Red Deer. The frightened market-people kept pouring by, on their way to their village homes; many of them, indeed, passed on, but many, too, remained with their countrymen, and even several Poles went up to Anton and asked whether they could be of use to him. At length came the locksmith, by a back way, in his green uniform and epaulette, followed by some of the town militia.

Anton rushed up to see how things were going on.

"There are eighteen of us," said the locksmith, "all safe men. The people in the market-place are dispersing, and those in the wine-store are not much stronger than before. Our captain is as brave as a lion. If you will help him, he is prepared to try a bold stroke. We can get into Löwenberg's house from behind. I made the lock on the back door myself. If we manage cleverly, we can surprise the leaders of the insurrection, and take them and their arms."

"We must attack them both in front and in the rear," replied Anton. "Then we shall be sure of them."

"Yes," said the locksmith, a little crestfallen, "if you and your party will attack them in front."

"We have no arms," cried Anton. "I will go with you, and so will the forester and a few more, perhaps; but an unarmed band against scythes and a dozen guns is out of the question."

"Look you, now," said the worthy locksmith; "it comes hard to us, too. Those who have just left wives and children in their first alarm are not much inclined to make targets of themselves. Our people are full of good-will, but those men yonder are desperate, and therefore let us get in quietly from behind. If we can surprise them, there will be the less bloodshed, and that's the chief thing. I have got no arms, only a sword for you."

The party accordingly set off in silence, the locksmith leading the way. "Our men are assembled in the captain's house," said he; "we can enter it through the garden without being seen."

At length, having got over hedges and ditches, they found themselves in the court-yard of a dyer.

"Wait here," said the locksmith, with some disquietude. "The dyer is one of us militiamen. His house door opens upon the back street, which takes into Löwenberg's court-yard: I am going to the captain."

The party had only a few minutes to wait before they were joined by the militia. The captain, a portly butcher, requested Anton to join forces and walk by his side. They moved on to the back entrance of Löwenberg's house, saw that the gate was neither locked nor guarded, and the court empty. They halted for a moment, and the forester proposed his plan.

"We are more than are wanted in the house," said he. "Hard by there is a broad cross-street leading to the market. Let me have the drummer, a few of the militia, and half of the country people. We will run to the market-place and invest the opening of the cross-street, shouting loudly. Those in front of the house will be diverted thither: meanwhile, you can force an entrance and take them prisoners. As soon as you hear the drum, let the captain rush through the court into the house and make fast the door."

"I approve the plan," said the burly captain, his blood thoroughly up; "only be quick about it."

The forester took six of the militia, beckoned to the bailiff and to some of the country people, and went quietly down the side street. Soon the beating of a drum was heard, and loud hurrahs. At that signal all rushed through the court, the captain and Anton waving their swords, and found themselves inside the house before any one was aware of them, for all were looking out at door and window on the other side.

"Hurrah!" cried the captain; "we have them," catching hold of one of the gentlemen. "Not one shall escape. Close the door!" he cried, and he held his victim fast by the collar like a cow by its horns. Ten strong men closed and locked the house door, so that all the more zealous of the enemy who were standing on the steps found themselves shut out. Next some of the band rushed up stairs, and the others spread themselves over the ground floor. All the conspirators on that floor, however, jumped out through the window, so that the Germans took nothing but a list of names, a quantity of scythes, and half a dozen guns belonging to the nobles. These the locksmith caught up, and ran, together with Anton and a few others, to join the forester's detachment, which they found in a critical position.

The beat of the drums and the shouting, together with the attack made simultaneously upon the house, had thrown the enemy into confusion. The men with scythes were standing about in disorder, while the bearer of the scarf, himself unarmed, was busy trying to rally them. On the other hand,

all such as had guns—stewards, huntsmen, and a few young men of rank, had marched against the forester's party. Both bands halted with weapons raised, kept back for a moment by the thought of the fearful consequences that must follow the word of command. At that moment, Anton and the valiant locksmith joined them, and the guns they brought were dispensed quick as lightning. A bloody conflict on the pavement now seemed unavoidable.

Just then a loud voice sounded from the window of the wine-store. "Brothers, we have them. Here is the prisoner. It is Herr von Tarow himself." All lowered their guns and listened. The captain showed his prisoner, who made no fruitless struggles to escape from his awkward situation. "And now," went on the orator, "listen to my words: all the windows of this house are invested; all the streets are invested; and as soon as I lift my finger you'll all be shot down dead."

"Hurrah, captain!" cried a voice from a house in the middle of the market-place, while the shopkeeper dwelling there projected his duck-gun from one of the windows of the first floor, the apothecary and post-master soon doing the same.

"Good-morning, gentlemen," cried the butcher, pleasantly, to these unexpected recruits. "You see, good people, that your resistance is vain, so throw away your scythes, or you are all dead men." A number of scythes clattered on the pavement.

"And as for you, gentlemen," continued the captain, "you shall be allowed to depart unmolested, if you give up your arms; but if any of you make any resistance, this man's blood be upon your heads." So saying, he caught hold of Tarowski by the head, and, holding it out of the window, drew a great knife. Throwing down its sheath into the street, he waved it so ferociously round the prisoner's head that the worthy butcher seemed for the moment transformed into a very cannibal.

Then the forester cried, "Hurrah! we have them! March, my friends." The drummer thundered away, and the Germans charged. The Poles fell into disorder, some random shots were fired on both sides, then the rebels took to flight, pursued by their enemies. Many sought refuge in the houses, others ran out of the town; while, on the other hand, armed citizens began to present themselves, and the dilatory members of the militia corps now joined the rest. The captain made over his prisoner to a few trusty men, and, waving off the congratulations that poured in upon him, cried, "Duty before all.

We have now to lock and invest the gates. Where is the captain of our allies?"

Anton stepped forward. "Comrade," said the butcher, with a military salute, "I propose that we muster our men and appoint the watches."

This was done, and those belonging to Rosmin were proud of their numbers. The national arms, washed clean and decorated by many busy feminine hands with the first flowers of the town gardens, were solemnly raised to their former place, all the men marching by them and presenting arms, while patriotic acclamations were raised by hundreds of throats.

Anton stood on one side, and when he saw the spring flowers on the escutcheon, he remembered having doubted in the morning whether he should see any flowers that year. Now their colors were gleaming out brightly on the shield of his fatherland. But what a day this had been to him!

Much against his will, he was summoned to the council convened to take measures for the public safety. Ere long he had a pen in his hand, and was writing, at the long green table, a report of the events of the day to the authorities. Prompt steps were taken: messengers were sent off to the next military station; the houses of the suspected searched; such of the country people as were willing to remain till the evening billeted in different houses. Patrols were sent out in all directions, a few prisoners examined, and information as to the state of the surrounding district collected. Discouraging tidings poured in on all sides. Bands of Poles from several villages round were said to be marching on the town. An insurrection had been successful in the next circle, and the town was in the hands of a set of Polish youths. There were tales of plunder, and of incendiarism too, and fearful rumors of an intended general massacre of the Germans. The faces of the men of Rosmin grew long again; their present triumph gave way to fears for the future. Some timid souls were for making a compromise with Herr von Tarow, but the warlike spirit of the majority prevailed, and it was determined to pass the night under arms, and hold the town against all invaders till the military should arrive.

By this time it was evening. Anton, alarmed at the numerous reports of plundering going on in the open country, left the town council, and sent the bailiff to collect all the Germans of their immediate district to march home together. When they reached the wooden bridge at the extremity of the

suburb, the townsmen who had accompanied them thither with beat of drum and loud hurrahs took a brotherly leave of their country allies.

"Your carriage is the last that shall pass to-day," said the locksmith; "we will break up the pavement of the bridge, and station a sentinel here. I thank you in the name of the town and of the militia. If bad times come, as we have reason to fear, we Germans will ever hold together."

"That shall be our rallying cry," called out the bailiff; and all the country people shouted their assent.

On their homeward way Anton and his associates fell into earnest conversation. All felt elated at the part they had that day played, but no one attempted to disguise from himself that this was but a beginning of evils. "What is to become of us in the country?" said the bailiff. "The men in the town have their stout walls, and live close together; but we are exposed to the revenge of every rascal; and if half a dozen vagabonds with guns come into the village, it is all over with us."

"True," said Anton, "we can not guard ourselves against large troops, and each individual must just take the chances of war; but large troops, under regular command, are not what we have most to fear. The worst are bands of rabble, who get together to burn and plunder, and henceforth we must take measures to defend ourselves against these. Stay at home to-morrow, bailiff, and you, smith of Kunau, and send for the other Germans round, on whom we can depend. I will ride over to-morrow morning early, and we will hold a consultation."

By this time they had reached the cross-way, and there the two divisions parted, and hurried home in different directions.

Anton got into the carriage, and took the forester with him, to help watch the castle through the night. In the middle of the wood they were stopped by a loud cry of "Halt! who goes there?"

"Karl!" exclaimed Anton, joyfully.

"Hurrah! hurrah! he is alive," cried Karl, in ecstasy. "Are you unhurt too?"

"That I am; what news from the castle?"

Now began a rapid interchange of question and answer. "To think that I was not with you!" cried Karl, again and again.

Arrived at the castle, a bright form flew up to the carriage. "You, lady!" cried Anton, springing out.

"Dear Wohlfart!" cried Lenore, seizing both his hands.

For a moment she hid her face on his shoulder, and her tears fell fast. Anton grasped her hand firmly, while he said, "A fearful time is coming. I have thought of you all day."

"Now that we have you again," said Lenore, "I can bear it all; but come at once to my father; he is dying with impatience." She drew him up the stairs.

The baron opened the door, and cried out, "What news do you bring?"

"News of war, baron," replied Anton, gravely; "the most hideous of all wars—war between neighbor and neighbor. The country is in open revolt."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The baron's estate lay in a corner of the Rosmin circle. Behind the forest, to the north, was the German village of Neudorf, and farther off, to the east, that of Kunau.

Both these spots were separated by a wide expanse of sand and heath from any Polish proprietors, Herr von Tarow being the nearest. To the west and south of the estate the country was inhabited by a mixed population; but the Germans there were strong, rich freeholders and large farmers having settled among the Slavonic race. Beyond Kunau and Neudorf, to the north, there was a Polish district peopled by small freeholders, for the most part in very reduced circumstances, and over head and ears in debt.

"It is on that side that our greatest danger lies," said the baron to Anton on the morning after the memorable market-day. "The villagers are our natural outposts. If you can induce the people to establish a systematic watch, let it be on the north; we will then try to maintain a regular communication with them. Do not forget the beacons and places of rendezvous. As you are already on such friendly terms with the rustics, you will be able to manage that part of the business best. Meanwhile, I shall drive, accompanied by young Sturm, to the next circle, and try to come to the same understanding with the landed gentry there."

Accordingly, Anton rode off to Neudorf. There he found

that fresh evil tidings had arrived in the night; some German villages had been surprised by armed bands, the houses searched for arms, and many young people dragged away. No one was working in the fields at Neudorf. The men sat in the bar of the public house, or stood about without any purpose, every hour expecting an attack.

Anton's horse was immediately surrounded by a dense crowd, and in a few minutes the bailiff had gathered the whole population together. Anton proceeded to state what might be done to guard the village against the danger of a sudden surprise; for instance, he advised the calling out of a regular peasant militia, sentinels on the road along the border, patrols, a rallying-place in the village, and other precautions which the baron had pointed out. "In this way," said he, "you will be able to procure our help in a short time, to defend yourselves against a weak foe, or to summon the military to your aid against a strong. In this way you will save your wives and children, your household goods, and, perhaps, your cattle from plunder and ill treatment. It will be no small labor, indeed, to keep watch thus night and day, but your village is a large one. Perhaps these measures will soon be enjoined by the government, but it is safer for all not to wait for that."

His pressing representations and the authority of the intelligent bailiff brought the community to a unanimous resolve. The young men of the village took up the matter eagerly, many professing themselves ready to buy a gun; and the women began to pack up their most valuable effects in chests and bundles.

From Neudorf, Anton went on to Kunau, where similar regulations were made; and finally it was arranged that the young men of both villages should come every Sunday afternoon to the baron's estate to be drilled.

When Anton returned to the castle, the existing means of defense on the estate itself had to be taken into consideration. A martial fever prevailed in the German colony: all were affected by it, even the most peaceful: the shepherd and his dog Crambo, who had, by night patrols, sentinels, and other disturbances, been worked up to such a state of excitement that he took to flying at the legs of all strangers—an act he had often rebuked in his young associate. All thoughts turned on weapons of warfare and means of defense. Alas! the mood of mind was all that could be desired, but the forces were very small. To make up for that, the staff was a distinguished one.

First of all, there was the baron—an invalid, it is true, but great in theory; then Karl and the forester, as respective leaders of the cavalry and infantry; while Anton was not to be despised in the commissariat and fortification department.

The baron now left his room each day to hold a council of war. He superintended the drill, heard reports from surrounding districts, and sent off messengers to the German circles. A remnant of military ardor lit up his face. He good-humoredly rallied the baroness about her fears, spoke words of encouragement to his German tenantry, and threatened to have all the evil-disposed in the village locked up at once, and kept on bread and water. It was touching to all to see how the blind man stood erect, musket in hand, to show certain niceties of manipulation to the forester, and then bent his ear down to ascertain whether the latter had thoroughly acquired them. Even Anton put on something of a martial panoply. He stuck a cockade in his cap; his voice assumed a tone of military severity, and ever since the Rosmin day he took to wearing an immense pair of water-proof boots, and his step fell heavy on the stair. He would have laughed at himself if any one had asked for what purpose he gave this particular outward expression to his state of mind; but no one did ask. It seemed natural and congruous to all, and especially to Karl, who never himself appeared but in such remnants of his dress uniform as he had carefully preserved, and who curled his mustache, and sang military songs all day long. As the greatest danger was to be apprehended from the lawless in their own village, he summoned all the men who had once served, and, with the aid of the forester, who was respected as a magician, made an impressive speech, addressed them as comrades, drew his sword, and cried, "We military men will keep order among the boors here." Then ordering a few quarts of brandy, he sang wild martial songs in chorus with them, gave them new cockades, and constituted them a species of militia. Thus, for a time at least, he gained a hold over the better part of the population, and heard through them of any conspiracy that was carried on in the tavern.

When the whole force of the estate was mustered before the castle walls, the men stared in amazement at each other. They had all been metamorphosed by the last few days. The agent looked like a wild man from some outlandish swamp, where he daily stood up to the hips in water. Those from the new farm resembled forms of a vanished era. The forester, with

his close-cut hair, long beard, and weather-beaten coat, looked an old mercenary of Wallenstein's army, who had been asleep in the forest depths for two hundred years, and now reappeared on the stage, violence and cruelty being again in the ascendant. The shepherd marched next to him, resembling a pious Hussite, with the broad brim of his round hat hanging low on his shoulders, a stout leathern girdle round his loins, and in his hand a long crook, to which he had fastened a bright steel point. His phlegmatic face and thoughtful eyes made him as strong a contrast as possible to the forester. All in all, the armed force of the estate did not amount to more than twenty men; consequently, it was very difficult to maintain any regular system of watching, either in the castle or the village. Each individual, it was plain, would have to make the greatest efforts, but none of them complained.

The next step was to see to the securing of the castle—to protect it from any nocturnal assault in the rear. Anton had a strong wooden fence run up from one wing to another. Thus a tolerably large court-yard was inclosed, and an open shed was roughly built on to the walls, to shelter fugitives and horses, if need were. The windows of the lower story were also strongly boarded; and as all the entrances were on this side of the house, strangers were allowed as little ingress as possible. The well that supplied the castle lay outside the fence, between the farm-yard and the castle: on which account, a large water-butt was made and filled each morning.

Next came tidings from Rosmin. The locksmith appeared, after being repeatedly sent for, to strengthen bolts and bars. He brought with him military greetings from the militia, and the fact that a company of infantry had entered the town. "But there are but few of them," said he, "and we militiamen have severe duty."

"And what have you done with your prisoners?" inquired Anton.

The locksmith scratched his ear and twitched his cap as he answered in a crestfallen tone: "So you have not yet heard? The very first night came a message from the enemy to the effect that if we did not give up the nobleman at once, they would march upon us with their whole force and set fire to our barns. I opposed the measure, and so did our captain; but every one who had a barn raised an outcry, and the end of it was that the town had to come to terms with Von Tarow. He gave his word that he and his would undertake nothing

further against us, and then we took him over the bridge and let him go."

"So he is free, false man that he is!" cried Anton, in indignation.

"Yes, indeed," said the locksmith; "he is on his estate again, and has a number of young gentlemen about him. They ride with their cockades over the fields just as they did before. Tarowski is a cunning man, who can open every castle door with a stroke of a pen, and get on with every one. There's no reaching him."

Of course, farming suffered from these warlike preparations. Anton insisted, indeed, upon what was absolutely necessary being done, but he felt that a time was come when anxiety about individual profit and loss vanished before graver terrors. The rumors, which grew daily more threatening, kept him, and those around him, in ever-increasing excitement; and at last they fell into a habitual state of feverish suspense, in which the future was looked forward to with reckless indifference, and the discomforts of the present endured as matter of course.

But more strongly than on any of the men around did this general fever seize upon Lenore. Since the day that she had waited for the absent Anton, she had seemed to begin a new life. Her mother mourned and despaired, but the daughter's young heart beat high against the storm, and the excitement was to her a wild enjoyment, to which she gave herself up, heart and soul. She was out of doors the whole day long, whatever the weather, and at the tavern door as often as the worst drunkard in the village, for each day the landlord and his wife had something new to tell her. Ever since Karl had mounted his hussar coat, she treated him with the familiarity of a comrade, and when he held a consultation with the forester, her fair head was put together with theirs. The three spent many an hour in council of war in Karl's room or in the farm-yard, the men listening with reverence to her courageous suggestions, and requesting her opinion as to whether Ignatz, Gottlieb, or Blasius from the village deserved to be trusted with a gun. It was in vain that the baroness remonstrated with her martial daughter; in vain that Anton tried to check her ardor; for, the greater his own, the more the mood displeased him in the young lady. Again, she struck him as too vehement and bold; nor did he disguise his views. Upon that she subsided a little, and tried to conceal her warlike tendencies from him, but they did not really abate. She

would have dearly liked to go with him to Neudorf and Kunau, to play at soldiers there, but Anton, once made so happy by her company, protested so strongly against the step that the young lady had to turn back at the end of the village.

However, on the day when the first drill of the men belonging to the estate was to take place, Lenore came out with a soldier's cap and a light sword, took her pony out of the stable, and said to Anton, "I shall exercise with you."

"Pray do nothing of the kind," replied he.

"Indeed I will," replied Lenore, saucily. "You want men, and I can do as good service as if I were one."

"But, dear young lady, it is so singular!"

"It is indifferent to me whether people think it singular or not. I am strong; I can go through a good deal; I shall not be tired."

"But before the servants," remonstrated Anton. "You are letting yourself down before the servants and the country people."

"That is my own concern," replied Lenore, doggedly; "do not oppose me; I am determined, and that is enough."

Anton shrugged his shoulders, and was obliged to acquiesce. Lenore rode next to Karl, and went through all the exercises as well as a lady's saddle allowed; but Anton, who was one of the infantry, looked over from his post at the bright face with dissatisfaction. She had never pleased him so little. Yet, as she sprang forward with the rest, wheeled her horse round, waved her sword, her bright hair floating in the wind, her eyes beaming with courage, she was enchantingly beautiful. But what would have charmed him in mere play seemed unfeminine now that this drilling had become a matter of life and death; and as soon as it was over, and Lenore came up to him with glowing cheeks, waiting that he should address her, he was silent, and she had to laugh and say to him, "You look so morose, sir; do you know that the expression is very unbecoming?"

"I am not pleased at your being so willful," replied Anton. Lenore turned away without a word, gave her horse to a servant, and walked back in dudgeon to the castle.

Since that time she took no share in the drilling, indeed, but she was always present when the men assembled, and looked on longingly from a little distance; and when Anton was away, she would ride off in secret with Karl to the other villages, or walk alone through woods and fields, armed with

a pocket pistol, and delighted if she could stop and cross-question any wayfarer.

Anton remonstrated with her on that subject too.

"The district is disturbed," he said. "How easily some rascal or other might do you an injury! If not a stranger, it might be some one from our own village."

"I am not afraid," Lenore would reply, "and the men of our village will do me no harm." And, in fact, she knew how to manage them better than Anton or any one else. She alone was always reverentially saluted, even by the rudest among them; and whenever her tall figure was seen in the village street, the men bowed down to the ground, and the women ran to the windows and looked admiringly after her. And she had the pleasure, too, of hearing them tell her so in Anton's hearing. One Sunday evening, Karl, the forester, and the shepherd sat watching in the farm-yard while the peasants were assembled drinking in the tavern, Sunday being the most dangerous day for those in the castle. Karl had furnished a room for military purposes in the late bailiff's house. Thither Lenore herself now carried a bottle of rum and some lemons, that the sentinels might brew themselves some punch. The shepherd and the forester grinned from ear to ear at the attention. Karl placed a chair for the young lady, the forester began to tell a tale of terror from the neighboring district, and in a few minutes Lenore was sitting with them, exchanging views on the course of events. Just as the punch was ready, and she poured it into two glasses and a mug, in came Anton. She did not exactly want him just then, but, however, he found no fault, and merely turned and beckoned to a stranger to come in. A slender youth in a blue coat, with bright woolen epaulettes, a soldier's cap in his hand, and wide linen trowsers pushed into his boots, proudly entered the room. As soon as he saw the lady, he was at her knees, and then he stood before her with downcast eyes, cap in hand. Karl went up to him: "Now then, Blasius, what news from the tavern?"

"Oh, nothing," replied the youth, in the melodious cadence with which the Pole speaks broken German. "Peasant sits, and drinks, and is merry."

"Are there strangers there? Has any one come from Tarow?"

"No one," said Blasius. "No one is there; but the host's niece is come to him, Rebecca, the Jewish maiden." Mean-

while he looked steadfastly at Lenore, as though it were to her that he had to deliver his report.

Lenore stepped to the table, poured out a glass of punch, and gave it to the youth, who received it with delight, quaffed it, set down the glass, and bent again at the lady's knee with a grace that a prince might have envied.

"You need never fear," cried he. "No one in the village will harm you; if any one offended you, we would kill him at once."

Lenore blushed and said, looking at Anton the while, "You know I have no fear, at all events of you;" and Karl dismissed the messenger with orders to return in an hour. As he left the room, Lenore said to Anton, "How graceful his bearing is!"

"He was in the Guards," replied Anton, "and is not the worst lad in the village; but I pray you not to rely too much upon the chivalry of the worthy Blasius and his friends. I was uneasy about you again all the afternoon, and sent your maid to meet you on the Rosmin road; for a traveling apprentice came running to the castle, frightened out of his senses, saying that he had been detained by an armed lady, and obliged to produce his passport. According to his story, the lady had a monstrous dog, as large as a cow, with her, and he complained that her aspect was awful. The poor man was positively beside himself."

"He was a craven," said Lenore, contemptuously. "As soon as he saw me with the pony he ran off, scared by his own bad conscience. Then I called after him, and threatened him with my pocket pistol."

In this manner the dwellers on the baron's estate daily awaited the outbreak of the insurrection on their own oasis. Meanwhile it spread like a conflagration over the whole province. Wherever the Poles were thickly congregated, the flames leaped up fiercely. On the borders, they flared unsteadily here and there, like fire in green wood. In many places they seemed quenched for a long time, then suddenly broke out again.

One Sunday afternoon there was to be a great drill of the united forces. The men of Neudorf and Kunau came with their flags—the foot-soldiers first, the mounted behind—the small band of cavalry from the castle riding to meet them, led by Karl, together with some men on foot, at whose head marched the forester, the generalissimo of all the troops. Even Anton was under his command. When Lenore saw them set out, she ordered her pony to be saddled.

"I will look on," said she to Anton.

"But only look on, dear lady!" said the latter, imploringly.

"Don't tutor me," cried Lenore.

The drilling-ground was at the edge of the wood. The forester had contrived, through ancient recollections, and after manifold consultations with the baron, to bring his men into good order; and Karl led his squadron with an ardor that might well make amends for lack of skill. For a long time they had marched, countermarched, performed various evolutions, and fired at a mark. The mock artillery echoed cheerfully through the forest. Lenore had looked on from a distance, but at last she could not resist the pleasure of taking part in the cavalry exercise, and, trotting on to their head, she whispered to Karl, "Just for a minute or two."

"What if Mr. Wohlfart see you?" whispered Karl, in reply.

"He will not see," was Lenore's laughing answer, as she took her place in the ranks.

The youths looked in amazement at the slender figure which trotted at their side. Owing to the admiration she excited, many performed their parts ill, and Karl had much fault to find.

"The young lady does it best," cried a Neudorf man during a pause, and all took off their hats and cheered her loudly.

Lenore bowed low, and made her pony curvet gayly. But her amusement was soon interrupted, for up came Anton. "It is really too bad," whispered he, angry in good earnest. "You expose yourself to familiar observations, which are not ill meant, but which would still offend you. This is no place for the display of your horsemanship."

"You grudge me every pleasure," replied Lenore, much aggrieved, and rode away.

When she found herself alone, she let her pony prance and caracole under a great pear-tree, and inwardly chafed against Anton. "How rudely he spoke to me!" thought she. "My father is right; he is very prosaic. When I saw him first, I was on this pony too, but then I pleased him better; we were both children then, but his manner was more respectful than now." The thought flashed across her mind how bright, fair, and pleasant her life was then, and how bitter now; and while she dreamed over the contrast, she let the pony cut caper after caper.

"Not bad, but a little more of the curb, Fräulein Lenore," cried a sonorous voice near her. Lenore looked round in

amazement. A tall slight figure leaned against the tree, arms crossed, and a satirical smile playing over the fine features. The stranger advanced and took off his hat. "Hard work for the old gentleman," said he, pointing to the pony. "I hope you remember me."

Lenore looked at him as at an apparition, and at last, in her confusion, slipped down from her saddle. A vision out of the past had risen palpably before her; the cool smile, the aristocratic figure, the easy self-possession of this man, belonged to the old days she had just been thinking of.

"Herr von Fink!" she cried, in some embarrassment. "How delighted Wohlfart will be to see you again!"

"I have already been contemplating him from afar," replied Fink, "and did I not know by certain infallible tokens that he it is whom I behold wading in uniform through the sand, I should not have believed it possible."

"Come to him at once," cried Lenore. "Your arrival is the greatest pleasure that he could have."

Accordingly, Fink went with her to the place where the men were engaged in shooting at a mark. Fink stepped behind Anton, and laid his hand on his shoulder. "Good-day, Anton," said he.

Turning round in amazement, Anton threw himself on his friend's breast. There was a rapid interchange of hasty questions and short answers.

"Where do you come from, welcome wanderer?" cried Anton, at length.

"From over there," replied Fink, pointing to the horizon. "I have only been a few weeks in the country. The last letter I got from you was dated last autumn. Thanks to it, I knew pretty well where to look for you. In the prevailing confusion, I consider it a remarkable piece of luck to have found you. There's Master Karl, too," cried he, as Karl sprang forward with a shout of delight. "Now we have half the firm assembled, and we might begin offhand to play at counting-house work; but you seem to have a different way of amusing yourselves here." Then turning to Lenore, he continued, "I have already presented myself to the baron, and heard from your lady mother where to find the martial young spirits. And now I have to implore your intercession. I have some acquaintance with this man, and would willingly spend a few days with him, but I am well aware how inconsiderate it would be to tax your hospitable home at a time

like this with the reception of a stranger. But yet, for his sake—he is a good fellow, on the whole—allow me to remain long enough clearly to understand the *façon* of the prodigious boots which the boy has drawn over his knees."

Lenore replied in the same strain: "My father will look upon your visit as a great pleasure; a kind friend is doubly valuable at a time like this. I go at once to desire a servant to place all Mr. Wohlfart's boots in your apartment, that you may be able to study their *façon* at your leisure." She bowed, and went off in the direction of the castle, leading her pony by the bridle.

Fink looked after her and cried, "By Jove! she is become a beauty; her bearing is faultless—nay, she even knows how to walk. I have no longer a shadow of doubt as to her having plenty of sense." Then, putting his arm into Anton's, he led him off to the shade of the wild pear-tree, and then, shaking him heartily by the hand, exclaimed, "I say again, well met, my trusty friend. Understand that I have not yet got over my astonishment. If any one had told me that I should find you painted red and black like a wild Indian, a battle-axe in your hand, and a fringe of scalp-locks round your loins, I should naturally have declared him mad. But you—born, as it would seem, to tread in the footsteps of your forefathers—to find you on this desolate heath, with thoughts of murder in your breast, and, as I live, without a neckcloth! If we two are changed, you, at all events, are not the least so. Perhaps, however, you are pleased with your change."

"You know how I came here?" replied Anton.

"I should think so," said Fink. "I have not forgotten the dancing-lessons."

Anton's brow grew clouded.

"Forgive me," continued Fink, laughing, "and allow something to an old friend."

"You are mistaken," replied Anton, earnestly, "if you believe that any thing of passion has brought me here. I have become connected with the baron's family through a series of accidents." Fink smiled. "I confess that these would not have affected me had I not been susceptible of certain influences. But I may venture to say that I am accidentally in my present responsible situation. At a time when the baron was very painfully circumstanced, I was fixed upon by his family as one who at all events had the will to be of use to them. They expressed a wish to engage my services for a

time. When I accepted their proposal, I did so after an inward conflict that I have no right to disclose to you."

"All that is very good," replied Fink; "but when the merchant buys a gun and a sword, he must at least know why he makes those purchases; and therefore forgive me the point-blank question, What do you mean to do here?"

"To remain as long as I feel myself essential, and then to look out a place in a merchant's office," said Anton.

"At our old principal's?" asked Fink, hastily.

"There or elsewhere."

"The deuce!" cried Fink. "That does not seem a very direct course, nor an open confession either; but one must not ask too much from you in the first hour of meeting. I will be more unreserved and candid to you. I have worked myself free over there; and thank you for your letter, and the advice your wisdom gave. I did as you suggested, made use of the newspapers to explode my Western Land Association. Of course, I flew with it into the air. I bought half a dozen pens with a thousand dollars, and had the New York gazettes and others continually filled with the most appalling reports of the good for nothingness of the company. I had myself and my partners cursed in every possible key. This made a sensation. Brother Jonathan's attention was caught; all our rivals fell upon us at once. I had the pleasure of seeing myself and my associates portrayed in a dozen newspapers as bloodthirsty swindlers and scoundrels—all for my good money too. It was a wild game. In a month the Western Land Company was so down that no dog would have taken a crust of bread from it. Then came my co-directors and offered to buy me out, that they might be rid of me. You may fancy how glad I was. For the rest, I bought my freedom dear, and have left the reputation behind me of being the devil himself. Never mind, I am free at all events. And now I have sought you out for two reasons; first, to see and chat with you; next, seriously to discuss my future life; and I may as well say at once that I wish you to share it. I have missed you sadly every day. I do not know what I find in you, for, in point of fact, you are but a dry fellow, and more contradictious than often suits me. But, in spite of all, I felt a certain longing for you all the time I was away. I have come to an understanding with my father, not without hot discussion and subsequent coolness. And now I repeat my former offer—come with me. Over the waters to England, across the seas, any

where and every where. We will together ponder and decide upon what to undertake. We are both free now, and the world is open to us."

Anton threw his arm round his friend's neck. "My dear Fritz," cried he, "we will suppose that I have expressed all that your noble proposal causes me to feel. But you see, for the present, I have duties here."

"According to your own most official statement, I presume that they will not last forever," rejoined Fink.

"That is true; but still we are not on equal terms. See," said Anton, stretching out his hand, "barren as this landscape is, and disagreeable the majority of its inhabitants, yet I look upon them with different eyes to yours. You are much more a citizen of the world than I, and would feel no great interest in the life of the state of which this plain and your friend are component parts, however small."

"No, indeed," said Fink, looking in amazement at Anton. "I have no great interest in it, and all that I now see and hear makes the state, a fragment of which you so complacently style yourself, appear to me any thing but respectable."

"I, however, am of a different opinion," broke in Anton. "No one who is not compelled to do so should leave this country at the present time."

"What do I hear?" cried Fink, in amazement.

"Look you," continued Anton; "in one wild hour I discovered how my heart clung to this country. Since then, I know why I am here. For the time being, all law and order is dissolved; I carry arms in self-defense, and so do hundreds like me in the midst of a foreign race. Whatever may have led me individually here, I stand here now as one of the conquerors who, in the behalf of free labor and civilization, have usurped the dominion of the country from a weaker race. There is an old warfare between us and the Slavonic tribes; and we feel with pride that culture, industry, and credit are on our side. Whatever the Polish proprietors around us may now be—and there are many rich and intelligent men among them—every dollar that they can spend, they have made, directly or indirectly, by German intelligence. Their wild flocks are improved by our breeds; we erect the machinery that fills their spirit-casks; the acceptance their promissory notes and lands have hitherto obtained rests upon German credit and German confidence. The very arms they use against us are made in our factories or sold by our firms. It is not by a

cunning policy, but peacefully through our own industry, that we have won our real empire over this country, and, therefore, he who stands here as one of the conquering nation, plays a coward's part if he forsakes his post at the present time."

"You take a very high tone on foreign ground," replied Fink; "and your own soil is trembling under your feet."

"Who has joined this province to Germany?" asked Anton, with outstretched hand.

"The princes of your race, I admit," said Fink.

"And who has conquered the great district in which I was born?" inquired Anton, farther.

"One who was a man indeed."

"It was a bold agriculturist," cried Anton; "he and others of his race. By force or cunning, by treaty or invasion, in one way or other, they got possession of the land at a time when, in the rest of Germany, almost every thing was effete and dead. They managed their land like bold men and good farmers, as they were. They have combined decayed or dispersed races into a state; they have made their home the central point for millions, and, out of the raw material of countless insignificant sovereignties, have created a living power."

"All that has been," said Fink; "that was the work of a past generation."

"They labored for themselves, indeed, while creating us," agreed Anton, "but now we have come into being, and a new German nation has arisen. Now we demand of them that they acknowledge our young life. It will be difficult to them to do this, just because they are accustomed to consider their collective lands as the domain of their sword. Who can say when the conflict between us and them will be ended? Perhaps we may long have to curse the ugly apparitions it will evoke. But, end as it will, I am convinced, as I am of the light of day, that the state which they have constructed will not fall back again into its original chaos. If you had lived much among the lower classes, as I have done of late years, you would believe me. We are still poor as a nation—our strength is still small; but every year we are working our way upward, every year our intelligence, well-being, and fellow-feeling increases. At this moment we here, on the border, feel like brothers. Those in the interior may quarrel, but we are one, and our cause is pure."

"Well done," said Fink, nodding approval; "that was spoken like a thorough German. The wintrier the time, the

greener the hope. From all this, Master Wohlfart, I perceive that you have no inclination at present to go with me."

"I can not," answered Anton, with emotion; "do not be angry with me because of it."

"Hear me," laughed Fink; "we have changed parts since our separation. When I left you a few years ago, I was like the wild ass in the desert, who scents a far-off fountain. I hoped to emerge out my prosy life with you into green pastures, and all I found was a nasty swamp. And now I come back to you wearied out, and find you playing a bold game with fate. You have more life about you than you had. I can't say that of myself. Perhaps the reason may be that you have had a home; I never had. However, we have had enough of wisdom; come and instruct me in your mode of warfare. Let me have a look at your squatters, and show me, if you can, a square foot of ground on this charming property in which one does not sink up to one's knees in sand."

Meanwhile preparations were going on at the castle for the stranger. The baron made one servant ascertain that there was a sufficiency of red and white wine in the cellar, and scolded another for not having had the broken harness repaired. The baroness ordered a dress to be taken out which she had not worn since her arrival; and Lenore thought with secret anxiety about the haughty aristocrat, who had struck her as so imposing at the time of the dancing-lessons, and whose image had often risen before her since then.

Below stairs the excitement was no less, for, excepting a few passing callers on business, this was the first visitor. The faithful cook determined to venture upon an artistic dish, but in this wretched country the materials were not to be had. She thought of killing a few fowls out of the farm-yard; but that measure was violently opposed by Suska, a little Pole, Lenore's confidential maid, who wept over the determined character of the cook, and threatened to call the young lady, till the former came to her senses, and sent off a barefooted boy to the forester's in all haste to ask for something out of the common way. A sudden onslaught was made upon spiders and dust; and a room got ready near Anton's, into which Lenore's little sofa, her mother's arm-chair, and carpet, were carried, to keep up the family dignity.

Fink, little guessing the disturbance his arrival occasioned, sauntered over the fields with Anton in a more cheerful mood than he had known for long. He spoke of his experiences, of

the refinements in money-making, and the giant growth of the New World; and Anton heard with delight a deep abhorrence of the iniquities in which he had been involved break out in the midst of his jokes.

"Life is on an immense scale over there, it is true," said he, "but it was in its whirl that I first learned to appreciate the blessings of the fatherland."

While thus talking, they returned to the castle to change their dress. Anton had merely time to glance in amazement at the arrangements of Fink's bed-room before they were summoned to the baroness. Now that the anxieties about domestic arrangements were over, and the lamps shed their mild radiance through the room, the family felt themselves cheerfully excited by the visit of this man of fashion. Once more, as of yore, there was the easy tone of light surface-talk, the delicate attention which gives to each the sense of contributing to another's enjoyment, the old forms, perhaps the old subjects of conversation. And Fink solved the problem ever offered by a new circle to a guest with the readiness which the rogue had always at his command when he chose. He gave to each and all the impression that he thoroughly enjoyed their society. He treated the baron with respectful familiarity, the baroness with deference, Lenore with straightforward openness. He seemed to take pleasure in addressing her, and soon overcame her embarrassment. The family felt that he was one of themselves; there was a freemasonry between them. Even Anton wondered how it came about that Fink, the newly-arrived guest, appeared the old friend of the house, and he the stranger; and again something of the reverence arose within him which, as a youth, he had always felt for the elegant, distinguished, and exclusive. But this was a mere shadow passing over his better judgment.

When Fink rose to retire, the baron declared with genuine cordiality how gladly he would have him remain their guest; and when he was gone, the baroness remarked how well the English style of dress became him, and what a distinguished-looking man he was. Lenore made no remark upon him, but she was more talkative than she had been for a long time past. She accompanied her mother to her bed-room, sat down by the bedside of the weary one, and began merrily to chat away, not, indeed, about their guest, but about many subjects of former interest, till her mother kissed her brow, and said, "That will do, my child; go to bed, and do not dream."

Fink stretched himself comfortably on the sofa. "This Lenore is a glorious woman," cried he, in ecstasy; "simple, open—none of the silly enthusiasm of your German girls about her. Sit an hour with me, as of old, Anton Wohlfart, baronial rent-receiver in a Slavonic Sahara! I say, you are in such a romantic position, that my hair still bristles with amazement. You have often stood by me in my scrapes of former days as my rational guardian angel; now you are yourself in the midst of madness; and, as I at present enjoy the advantage of being in my right mind, my conscience forbids me to leave you in such confusion."

"Fritz, dear friend!" cried Anton, joyfully.

"Well, then," said Fink, "you see that I wish to remain with you for a while. Now I want you to consider how this is to be done. You can easily manage it with the ladies; but the baron?"

"You have heard," replied Anton, "that he esteems it a fortunate chance which brings a knight like you to this lonely castle; only"—he looked doubtfully around the room—"you must learn to put up with many things."

"Hmm—I understand," said Fink; "you are become economical."

"Just so," said Anton. "If I could fill sacks with the yellow sand of the forest, and sell it as wheat, I should have to sell many and many sacks before I could put even a small capital into our purse."

"Where you have pushed yourself in as purse-bearer, I could well suppose the purse an empty one," said Fink, dryly.

"Yes," replied Anton, "my strong-box is an old dressing-case, and, I assure you, it could hold more than it does. I often feel an unconquerable envy of Mr. Purzel and his chalk in the counting-house. Could I but once have the good fortune to behold a row of gray linen bags! As to bank-notes and a portfolio of stocks, I dare not even think of them."

Fink whistled a march. "Poor lad," said he. "Yet there is a large estate and a regular farm-establishment, which must either bring in or take out. What do you live upon, then?"

"That is one of the mysteries of the ladies, which I hardly dare to disclose. Our horses munch diamonds."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "But is it possible that Rothsattel can have come to this?"

Anton then sketched, with some reserve, the baron's circumstances, speaking enthusiastically, at the same time, of the

noble resignation of the baroness, and the healthy energy of Lenore.

"I see," said Fink, "that things are still worse than I supposed. How is it possible that you can carry on such a farm? The birds of the air are rich compared to you."

"As things are," continued Anton, "we may contrive to struggle on till quieter times—till the judicial sale of the family estate. The creditors will not press now, and lawyers are almost without work. The baron can not manage this estate without a large capital, but neither can he give it up at present without forfeiting the little that its sale may hereafter bring; and, besides, the family have no other roof over their heads. All my endeavors, during the last week, to persuade them to leave this province, have been in vain. They are desperately resolved to await their fate here. The baron's pride objects to a return to his former neighborhood, and the ladies will not leave him."

"Then at least send them to the neighboring town, and do not expose them to the assault of every drunken band of boors."

"I have done what I could; I am powerless in this respect," replied Anton, gloomily.

"Then, my son, allow me to tell you that your warlike apparatus is not very encouraging. With the dozen or two that you can collect, you will hardly keep off an invasion of rascals. You can not even defend the premises with that handful, to say nothing of covering the ladies' escape. Have you no prospect of procuring any soldiers?"

"None," replied Anton.

"A thoroughly comfortable, cheerful prospect!" cried Fink. "And, in spite of it, you have sown your fields, and the little farm works on. I have heard from Karl how it looked when you came, and what improvements you have made; you have managed capitally. No American, no man of any other country, would have done the same; in a desperate case, commend me to the German. But the ladies and your infant establishment must be better protected. Hire twenty able-bodied men; they will guard the house."

"You forget that we are as little able to feed twenty idle mouths as is the owl on the tower."

"Let them work!" cried Fink; "you have here land enough to employ a hundred hands. Have you no swamps to drain, or ditches to dig? There is a row of wretched puddles yonder."

"That is work for another season," replied Anton; "the ground is too wet now."

"Have a hundred acres of forest sown or planted. Does the brook hold out in the summer?"

"I hear that it does," replied Anton.

"Then turn it to some account."

"Do not forget," said Anton, smiling, "how difficult it would be to get good workmen with military abilities to come just now into our ill-renowned district."

"To the devil with your objections!" cried Fink; "send Karl into a German district, and he will hire you plenty of people."

"You have already heard that we have no money. The baron is not in a position to carry on greater improvements, with increased expenditure."

"Let me do it, then," replied Fink; "you can repay me when you are able."

"It is doubtful whether we should ever be able."

"Well, then, he need never know what the men cost."

"He is blind," replied Anton, with a slight tone of reproach; "and I am in his service, and bound to lay all my accounts before him. Certainly, he might accept a loan from you after a few scruples, for his views of his circumstances vary with his moods. But the ladies have no such illusions. Your presence would be an hourly humiliation to them, if they were conscious of owing additional comforts to your means."

"And yet they have accepted the greater sacrifice that you have made for them," said Fink, gravely.

"Perhaps they consider that my humble services entail on me no sacrifice," replied Anton, blushing. "They are accustomed to me as the baron's agent. But you are their guest, and their self-respect will endeavor to conceal from you, as much as possible, the difficulties of their position. To make your apartment habitable, they have plundered their own; the very sofa on which you lie is from the young lady's bed-room."

Fink looked eagerly at the sofa, and settled himself on it again. "As it does not suit me," said he, "to travel off immediately, you will have the goodness to point out to me some way of living here with propriety. Tell me, offhand, something about the mortgages, and the prospects of the estate; assume for the moment that I am to be the unfortunate purchaser of this Paradise."

Anton made the statement required.

"That, at all events, is not so desperate," said Fink. "Now hear my proposal; you can not go on as at present; this restricted establishment is too undesirable for all parties, most of all for you. The property may be fearfully devastated, but still it seems to me possible to make something of it. Whether you are the people to do so or not, I will not decide; though if you, Anton, are willing to devote some years of your life to it, and to sacrifice yourself still further to the interests of others, it is not impossible that, in more tranquil times, you may succeed in procuring the necessary capital. Meantime I will advance—say fifteen thousand dollars, and the baron will give me a mortgage for that sum. This loan will not much diminish your income, and it will make it easier for you to get over this bad year."

Anton rose and paced up and down uneasily.

"It won't do," cried he, at length; "we can not accept your generous proposal. Look you, Fritz: a year ago, before I knew the man as well as I do now, I was intensely anxious to lead our principal to take an interest in the baron's affairs, and if you had made me this offer then, I should have been delighted; but now I should consider it unjust to you and to the ladies to accept your proposal."

"Shall the sofa out of Lenore's bed-room be defiled by the tobacco-ashes of your guests? I do it now; later it will be done by the Polish scythe-bearers."

"We must go through with it," replied Anton, mournfully.

"Headstrong boy!" cried Fink; "you shall not get rid of me thus. And now off with you, stiff-necked Tony!"

After this conversation, Fink did not allude further to his projected loan, but he had several confidential conversations in the course of the following day with Karl, and when evening came, he said to the baron, "May I request you to lend me your horse to-morrow? He is an old acquaintance of mine. I should like to ride over your property. Do not be angry with me, dear lady, if I fail to make my appearance at dinner."

"He is rich; he is come here to buy," said the baron to himself. "This Wohlfart has told his friend that there is a bargain to be made in this quarter. The speculation is beginning; I must be cautious."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was a sunny morning in April—one of those genial growing days that expand the leaf-bud on the trees, and quicken the throbs of the human heart. Lenore went with hat and parasol out into the farm-yard, and walked through the cow-houses. The horned creatures looked full at her with their large eyes, and raised their broad damp noses, some of them lowing in expectation of receiving something good at her hands.

"Is Mr. Wohlfart here?" asked Lenore of the bailiff, who was hurrying by to the stable.

"He is in the castle, my lady."

"His guest is with him, I suppose?" she further inquired.

"Herr von Fink rode off this morning early to Neudorf. He can't rest in the house, and is always happiest on horseback. He should have been a hussar."

When Lenore heard in which direction Herr von Fink had ridden, she walked slowly in a different one to avoid meeting him, and crossed the brook and the fields to the wood. She gazed at the blue sky and reviving earth. The winter wheat and the green grass looked so cheerful that her heart laughed within her. The spring had breathed on the willows along the brook; the yellow branches were full of sap, and the first leaves bursting out. Even the sand did not annoy her to-day. She stepped rapidly through the expanse of it that girdled the forest, and hurried on through the firs to the cottage. The whole wood was alive with hum and cry. Wherever a group of other trees rose amid the firs, the loud chirp of the chaffinch was heard, or the eager twitter of some little newly-wedded birds, disputing about the position of their nest. The beetle in his black cuirass droned around the buds of the chestnut; at times a wild bee, newly wakened from its winter sleep, came humming by; even brown butterflies fluttered over the bushes, and, wherever the ground sunk into hollows, these were gay with the white and yellow stars of the anemone and the primrose. Lenore took off her straw hat, and let the mild breeze play about her temples, while she drew in long draughts of forest fragrance. She often stopped and listened to the sounds

around her — contemplated the tender leaves of the trees, stroked the white bark of the birch, stood by the rippling fountain before the forester's house, and caressed the little firs in the hedge, which stood as close and regular as the bristles in a brush. She thought she had never seen the forest so cheerful before. The dogs barked furiously; she heard the fox rattle his chain, and looked up at the bull-finch, who jumped to and fro in his cage, and tried to bark like his superiors.

"Hush, Hector! hush Bergmann!" cried Lenore, knocking at the door. The loud barking changed into a friendly welcome. As she opened the door, Bergmann, the otter-hound, came straddling toward her, wagging his tail immoderately, and Hector made a succession of audacious leaps, while even the fox crept back into its kennel, laid its nose on its trough, and looked slyly at her. But she saw a horse's head on the other side of the hedge; he that she had meant to avoid was actually here. For a moment she remained irresolute, and was going to turn away, when the forester came out. Now, then, retreat was impossible, and she followed him in. Fink stood in the middle of the room, in the full light of the rays which fell through the small panes. He advanced politely. "I came to make acquaintance," said he, pointing to the forester; "and here I am admiring your stout-hearted vassal and his comfortable home." The forester placed a chair; Lenore could but take it. Fink leaned against the brown wall, and looked at her with undisguised admiration. "You are a wonderful contrast to this old boy and to the whole room," said he, glancing round. "Pray make no sign with your parasol; all these stuffed creatures only wait your command to come to life again, and lay themselves at your feet. Look at the heron yonder, raising its head already."

"It is only the effect of the sunshine," said the forester, comfortingly.

Lenore laughed. "We know what that means," cried Fink; "you are in the plot; you are the gnome of this queen. If there be no magic here, let me sleep out the rest of my days. One wave of that wand, and the beams of this great bird-cage will open, and you fly with your whole suite out into the sunshine. Doubtless your palace is on the summit of the fir-trees without; there are the pleasant halls in which your throne stands, mighty mistress of this place, fair-haired goddess of Spring!"

"My comfort is," said Lenore, somewhat confused, "that

it is not I who occasion these ideas, but the pleasure you take in the ideas themselves. I only chance to be the unworthy subject of your fancy. You are a poet."

"Fie!" cried Fink; "how can you detract from me so much! I a poet! Except a few merry sailors' songs, I do not know a single piece of poetry by heart. The only lines I care for are some fragments of the old school; for example, 'Hurrah! Hurrah! hop, hop, hop,' in a poem which, if I am not mistaken, bears your name. And even to these classic lines I have to object that they rather represent the material trot of a cart-horse than the course of a phantom steed. But we must not be too exact with these pen-and-ink gentry. Well, then, with this single exception, you will find no poetry in me, except a few of the great Schiller's striking lines: *Potz Blitz, das ist ja die Gustel von Blasewitz.* There's much truth in that passage."

"You are making fun of me," said Lenore, somewhat offended.

"Indeed I am not," asseverated Fink. "How can any one make or read poems in these days of ours, when we are constantly living them? Since I have been back in the old country, scarce an hour passes without my seeing or hearing something that will be celebrated by knights of the pen a hundred years hence. Glorious material here for art of every kind! If I had the misfortune to be a poet, I should now be obliged to rush out in a fit of inspiration, hide myself in the kennel, and, at a safe distance from all exciting causes, write a passionate sonnet, while the fox kept biting my heels. But, as I am no poet, I prefer to enjoy the beautiful when it is before me, to putting it into rhyme." And again he looked admiringly at the lady.

"Lenore!" cried a harsh voice from a corner of the room. Lenore and Fink looked in amazement at each other.

"He has learned it," said the forester, pointing to the raven; "in a general way he has left off learning, and sits there sulking with every one, but still he has learned that."

The raven sitting on the stove bent down his head, cast a shrewd glance at both the guests, kept moving his beak as though speaking to himself, and alternately nodding and shaking his head.

"The birds already begin to speak," cried Fink, going up to the raven; "the ceiling will soon fly off, and I shall be left alone with Hector and Bergmann. Now, sorcerer, does the water boil?"

The forester looked into the stove. "It boils famously," he said; "but what is to be done next?"

"We will ask the lady to help us," replied Fink. "I have," said he, turning to Lenore, "already been with your family trapper as far as the distillery and back, and I have brought what always serves me on my travels for breakfast and dinner." He took out a few tablets of chocolate. "We will concoct something like a beverage with this, if you do not disdain to lend us your aid. I propose that we try to mix this with water as well as we can. It would be charming of you to vouchsafe an opinion as to how we ought to set about it."

"Have you a grater or a mortar?" inquired Lenore, laughing.

"I have neither of those machines," replied the forester.

"A hammer, then," suggested Fink, "and a clean sheet of paper."

The hammer was soon brought, but the paper was only found after a long search. Fink undertook to pound the chocolate, the forester brought fresh water from the spring, Lenore washed out some cups, and Fink hammered away with all his heart. "This is antediluvian paper," said he, "thick as parchment; it must have lain for some centuries in this magic hut." Lenore shook the chocolate powder into the saucepan, and stirred it. Then they all three sat down, and much enjoyed the result of their handiwork.

The golden sunbeams shone fuller into the room, lighting up the bright form of the beautiful girl, and the fine face of the man opposite her; then they fell upon the wall, and decked the head of the heron and the wings of the hawk. The raven came to the end of his soliloquy, and fluttered from his seat, hopping about the lady's feet, and croaking out again, "Lenore! Lenore!"

Lenore now conversed at her ease with the stranger, and the forester every now and then threw in a suitable remark. They spoke of the district and its inhabitants.

"Wherever I have met Poles in foreign lands, I have got on very well with them," said Fink. "I am sorry that these disturbances prevent one visiting them in their own homes; for, certainly, one best learns to know men from seeing them there."

"It must be delightful to see so many different scenes and people," cried Lenore.

"It is only at first that the difference strikes you. When one has observed them a while, one comes to the conclusion that they are every where much alike: a little diversity in the color of the skin and other details; but love and hate, laughter and tears, these the traveler finds every where, and every where these are the same. About twenty weeks ago I was half a hemisphere off, in the log hut of an American, on a barren prairie. It was just the same as here. We sat at a stout rustic table like this, and my host was as like this old gentleman as one egg is to another, and the light of the winter sun fell in just the same way through the small window. But if men have so little to distinguish them, women are still more alike in essentials. They only differ in one trifling particular."

"And what is that?" asked the forester.

"They are rather more or less neat," said Fink, carelessly; "that is the whole difference."

Lenore rose, offended at his tone more than at his words.

"It is time that I should return," said she, coldly, tying on her straw hat.

"When you rose, all the brightness left the room," cried Fink.

"It is only a cloud passing over the sun," said the forester, going to the window; "that causes the shadow."

"Nonsense," replied Fink; "it is the straw hat hiding the lady's hair that does it; the light comes from those golden locks."

They left the house, the forester locked the door, and each went off in different directions.

Lenore hurried home; the linnet sang, the thrush whistled, but she did not heed them. She blamed herself for having crossed the threshold of the forester's house, and yet she could not turn away her thoughts from it. The stranger made her feel uneasy and insecure. Was he thus daring because nothing was sacred to him, or was it only through his extreme self-possession and self-dependence? Ought she to be angry with him, or did her sense of awkwardness only arise from the folly of an inexperienced girl? These questions she kept constantly asking herself, but, alas! she found no answer.

When Anton wanted to send a message that evening to the shepherd, neither Karl nor any other messenger was to be found, so he went himself. He was not a little surprised to see in one of the farthest fields through which he had to go his

friend Fink on horseback, and the German farmer and Karl busily occupied near him. Fink was galloping along short distances, the others placing black and white pegs in the ground, and taking them out again. And then Karl looked through a small telescope that he rested on his peg. "Five-and-twenty paces," cried Fink.

"Two inches fall," screamed back Karl.

"Five-and-twenty, two," said the farmer, making an entry in his pocket-book.

"So you have come, have you?" cried Fink, laughing, to his friend. "Wait a moment; we shall soon have done." Again a certain number of leaps, observations through the telescope, and entries in the pocket-book; then the men collected their pegs, and Fink rapidly cast up the figures in the farmer's book. Then giving it back with a smile, he said, "Come on with me, Anton, I have something to show you. Place yourself by the brook, with your face to the north. There the brook forms a straight line from west to east, the border of the wood a semicircle. Wood and brook together define the segment of a circle."

"That is evident," said Anton.

"In olden times the brook ran differently," continued Fink. "It swept along the curve of the wood, and its old bed is still visible. If you walk along the ancient water-course toward the west, you come to the point where the old channel diverges from the new. It is the point where a wretched bridge crosses the brook, and the water in its present bed has a fall of more than a foot, strong enough to turn the best mill going. The ruins of some buildings stand near it."

"I know the place well enough," said Anton.

"Below the village, the old channel bends down to the new. It encompasses a wide plain, more than five hundred acres, if I can trust the paces of this horse. The whole of this ground slopes down from the old channel to the new. There are a few acres of meadow, and some tolerable arable land. The most part is sand and rough pasture, the worst part of the estate, as I hear."

"I allow all that," said Anton, with some curiosity.

"Now mark me. If you lead back the brook to its old channel, and force it to run along the bow instead of forming the arc of that bow, the water that now runs to waste will irrigate the whole plain of five hundred acres, and change the barren sand into green meadows."

"You are a sharp fellow," cried Anton, excited at the discovery.

"These acres, well irrigated, would yield a ton of hay an acre; consequently, each acre would bring in a clear profit of five dollars, or, in other words, the five hundred acres would give a yearly income of two thousand five hundred, and to bring this about would require an outlay of fifteen thousand dollars at the very outside. This, Anton, was what I had to say to you."

Anton stood there amazed. There was no doubt that Fink's calculations were not made at random either as to outlay or return, and the advantageous prospect which such a measure opened out occupied him so much that he walked on for some time in silence. "You show me water and pastures in the desert," said he, at length. "This is cruel of you, for the baron is not in a condition to carry out this improvement. Fifteen thousand dollars!"

"Perhaps ten might do," said Fink, sarcastically. "I have drawn this castle in the air for you, to punish you for your stiff-neckedness the other evening. Now let us speak of something else."

At night the baron, with an important air, summoned his wife and Lenore to a conference in his room. He sat up in his arm-chair, and said, with a greater degree of satisfaction than he had for a long time evinced, "It was easy to discover that this visit of Fink's was ot exactly accidental, nor occasioned by his friendship for Mı Wohlfart, as the young men both made it appear: you two pretended to be wiser than I; but I was right after all, and the visit concerns us more nearly than our agent."

The baroness cast a terrified glance at her daughter, but Lenore's eyes were so fully fixed on her father that her mother was comforted.

"And what do you suppose has brought this gentleman here?" continued the baron.

Lenore shook her head, and said at last, "Father, Herr von Fink has long been most intimate with Wohlfart, and they have not seen each other for some years. How natural that Fink should take advantage of his slight acquaintance with us to spend a few weeks with his dearest friend! Why should we seek any other reason for his presence?"

"You speak as young people always do. Men are less influenced by ideal impressions, and more ruled by their own interest, than your juvenile wisdom apprehends."

"Interest!" said the baroness.

"What is there surprising in it?" continued the baron. "Both are tradespeople. Fink knows enough of the charms of business to lose no opportunity of making a good bargain. I will tell you why he is come here. Our excellent Wohlfart has written to him stating, 'Here is an estate, and this estate has an owner who is at present unable to overlook its management himself. There is something to be made here. You have money, therefore come; I am your friend; some of the profits will naturally fall to my share.'"

The baroness gazed steadfastly at her husband, but Lenore sprang up and cried, with all the energy of a deeply-wounded heart, "Father, I will not hear you speak thus of a man who has never shown us any thing but the most unselfish devotion. His friendship for us is such as to enable him to bear with boundless patience the privations of this lonely place, and the disagreeables of his present position."

"His friendship?" said the baron; "I never laid claim to so great a distinction."

"We have done so, though," cried Lenore, impetuously. "At a time when my mother found no one else to stand by us, Wohlfart faithfully clung to us still. From the day that my brother brought him to us till this very hour, he has acted for you and cared for us."

"Very well," admitted the baron; "I find no fault with his activity. I willingly allow that he keeps the accounts in good order, and is very industrious in return for a small salary. If you understood men's motives better, you would hear me more patiently. After all, there is no harm in what he has done. I want capital, and am, as you know, a good deal embarrassed besides. What should prevent proposals being made to me which would advantage others and do me no injury?"

"For God's sake, father, what proposals do you mean? It is false that Wohlfart has any other interest at heart but yours."

The baroness beckoned to her daughter to be silent. "If Fink wishes to purchase the estate," said she, "I shall hail his resolve as a blessing—the greatest blessing, beloved Oscar, that could happen to you now."

"We are not talking of buying," replied the baron. "I shall think twice before I give away the estate in such a hurry under the present circumstances. Fink's proposal is of a different kind; he wishes to become my tenant."

Lenore sank down speechless in her chair.

"He wishes to rent from me five hundred acres of level ground, in order to convert them into profitable meadows. I do not deny that he has spoken openly and fairly on the subject. He has proved to me in figures how great his gains would be, and offered to pay the first year's rent at once—nay, more, he has offered to give up his tenancy in five years, and make over the meadows to me, provided I repay him the expenses incurred."

"Gracious Heaven!" cried Lenore; "you have surely refused this generous proposal."

"I have required time for deliberation," replied the baron, complacently. "The offer is, as I have already said, not exactly disadvantageous to myself; at the same time, it might be imprudent to concede such advantages to a stranger, when, in a year or so, I might be able to carry out this improvement on my own account."

"You will never be able to do so, my poor, my beloved husband," cried the baroness, weeping, and throwing her arms about the baron's neck, while he sank down annihilated, and laid his head on her breast like a little child.

"I must know whether Wohlfart knows of this proposal, and what he says to it," cried Lenore, decidedly; "and, if you allow me, father, I will at once send for him." As the baron did not reply, she rang the bell for the servant, and left the room to meet him at the door.

Fink sat, meanwhile, in Anton's room, amusing himself with rallying his friend. "Since you have given up smoking, your good angel has deserted you, after having so torn his hair at your stiff-neckedness that there he is now sitting bewigged among the angel choir. As for you, your punishment is to be the having your soul sewed up in a turnip-leaf, and daily smoked by the smallest imps in the pit."

"Have you been a member of some pious fraternity in America, that you are so well acquainted with the proceedings of the spiritual world?" inquired Anton, looking up from his account-book.

"Silence!" said Fink; "formerly there were, at least, occasional hours when you could trifle too, but now you are always carrying on your everlasting book-keeping, and, by Tantalus, all for nothing—for nothing at all!"

The servant entered, and summoned Anton to the baron.

As the latter left the room, Fink called out, "Apropos; I

have offered to rent the five hundred acres from the baron at two dollars and half the acre—the land to be made over in five years' time on repayment of the capital expended, either in money or by a mortgage. Off with you, my boy!"

When Anton entered the baron's apartment, he found the baroness at her husband's side, his hand in hers, while Lenore walked restlessly up and down the room. "Have you heard of the offer that Herr von Fink has made to my father?" asked she.

"He has this moment told me of it," replied Anton. The baron made a face.

"And is it your opinion that my father ought to accept the offer?"

Anton was silent. "It is an advantageous one for the estate," said he, at length, with considerable effort. "The outlay of capital is essential to its improvement."

"I don't want to be told that," replied Lenore, impatiently, "but to know whether you, as our friend, advise us to accept this offer?"

"I do not," said Anton.

"I knew that you would say so," cried Lenore, stepping behind her father's chair.

"You do not; and wherefore, if you please?" inquired the baron.

"The present time, which makes all things uncertain, seems to me little fitted for so bold a speculation; besides which, I believe Fink to be influenced by motives which do him honor, but which would render it painful to the baron to accept his offer."

"You will allow me to be the judge of what I ought or ought not to accept," said the baron. "As a mere question of business, this measure would be advantageous to both parties."

"That I must allow," said Anton.

"And as to the views that people may take of political prospects, that is merely a personal matter. He who does not allow his undertakings to be interfered with is more praiseworthy than he who, through a vague fear, postpones advantageous measures."

"That, too, I allow."

"Would this undertaking lead to Herr von Fink permanently taking up his abode in our neighborhood?" asked the baroness.

"I do not think so; he would make over the task to a farmer, and his temperament is sure to send him wandering off again. As to his motives, I can but surmise. I believe them to be mainly the respect and regard he feels for your family, and possibly the wish to have some right to remain with you in these unquiet times. The very danger that would make this country undesirable to others has a charm for him."

"And would you not be glad to retain your friend with you?" inquired the baroness further.

"Till to-day I had no hope of it," answered Anton. "Formerly, my task used to be that of holding him back from precipitate resolves, and from staking much upon a sudden fancy."

"You consider, then," said the baron, "that your friend has been precipitate in his proposal to me?"

"His proposal is a bold one, so far as he himself is concerned," returned Anton, significantly; "and there is something in it, baron, which does not satisfy me on your account, though I should find a difficulty in defining it."

"Thank you," said the baron; "we will discuss the subject no further; there is no hurry about it." Anton bowed and left the room.

Lenore stood silently at the window, repeating to herself his last words, "I should find a difficulty in defining it," while a crowd of painful thoughts and forebodings rushed through her mind. She was angry with her father's weakness, and indignant with Fink for presuming to offer them assistance. Whether his offer were accepted or not, their relations to their guest were changed by it. They were indebted to him. He was no longer a stranger. He had intruded into their private griefs. She thought of the curl of his lip, of the contraction of his eyebrows; she fancied she heard him laughing at her father and at her. He had entered their house in his off-hand way, and now carelessly seized the reins, and meant to direct their fortunes as he liked. Perhaps her parents might owe their deliverance to one of his arbitrary caprices. This morning she could feel at her ease with him, brilliant man of the world as he was; they were on equal terms, but how should they meet henceforth? Her pride rebelled against one whose influence she so sensibly felt. She determined to treat him coldly; she made castles in the air as to how he would speak, and how she would reply, and her fancy kept flying round the image of the stranger as the scared mother-bird does around the enemy of her nest.

"And what will you do, Oscar?" inquired the baroness.

"My father can not accept," cried Lenore, energetically.

"What is your opinion?" said the baron, turning to his wife.

"Choose what will soonest set you free from this estate—from the care, the gloom, the insecurity which are secretly preying on you. Let us go to some distant land, where men's passions are less hideously developed. Let us go far away; we shall be more peaceful in the narrowest circumstances than we are here."

"Thus, then, you advise the acceptance of his offer," said the baron. "He who rents a part will soon undertake the whole."

"And pay us a pension!" cried Lenore.

"You are a foolish girl," said her father. "You both excite yourselves, which is unnecessary. The offer is too important to be refused or accepted offhand. I will weigh the matter more narrowly. Your Wohlfart will have plenty of time to examine the conditions," added he, more good-humoredly.

"Listen, dear father, to what Wohlfart has already spoken, and respect what he keeps back."

"Yes, yes, he shall be listened to," said the baron. "And now good-night, both of you. I will reconsider the matter."

"He will accept," said Lenore to her mother; "he will accept, because Wohlfart has dissuaded him, and because the other offers him ready money. Mother, why did you not say that we could never look the stranger in the face if he gave us alms in our very house?"

"I have no longer any pride or any hope," replied her mother, in a low voice.

As Anton slowly re-entered his room, Fink called out cheerfully, "How goes it, man of business? Am I to be tenant, or will the baron himself undertake the matter? He would like it dearly. In that case, I lay claim to compensation—free room for myself and my horse as long as they play at war hereabouts."

"He will accept your offer," replied Anton, "though I advised him not."

"You did!" cried Fink. "Yes, indeed, it's just like you. When a drowning mouse clings to a raft, you make it a long speech on the imperative nature of moral obligations, and hurl it back into the water."

"You are not so innocent as a raft," said Anton, laughing.

"Hear me," continued Fink; "I have no superfluous sentimentality; but in this particular case I should not consider it friendly in you to wish to edify me by a lecture. Is it then so unpleasant to have me to help you through these confounded times?"

"I have known you long enough, you rogue," said Anton, "to feel sure that your friendship for me has had a good deal to do with your offer."

"Indeed!" said Fink, sarcastically; "and how much, pray? It is a good for nothing age: however virtuously one may act, one is so dissected that virtue turns to egotism under the knife of malice."

Anton stroked his cheek. "I do not dissect," said he. "You have made a generous offer, and I am not discontented with you, but with myself. In my first delight at your arrival, I disclosed more about the baron's circumstances and the ladies' anxieties than was right. I myself introduced you into the mysteries of the family, and you have used the knowledge you acquired from me in your own dexterous way. It is I who have entangled you with the affairs of this family, and your capital with this disturbed country. That all this should have happened so suddenly is against my every feeling, and I am amazed at my own incaution in having brought it about."

"Of course," laughed Fink, "it is your sweetest enjoyment to be anxious about those around you."

"It has twice happened to me," continued Anton, "whose caution you so often laugh at, to speak unguardedly to strangers about the circumstances of this family. The first time that I asked help for the Rothsattels it was refused me, and this, more than any thing else, led me out of the counting-house hither; and now that my second indiscretion has procured the help I did not ask, what will the consequences be?"

"To lead you hence back into the counting-house," laughed Fink. "Did one ever see such a subtle Hamlet in jack-boots? If I could only find out whether you secretly desire or fear such a logical conclusion!" Then drawing a piece of money from his pocket, he said, "Heads or tails, Anton? Blonde or brunette? Let us throw."

"You are no longer in Tennessee, you soul-seller!" laughed Anton against his will.

"It should have been an honorable game," said Fink, coolly. "I meant to give you the choice. Remember that hereafter."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE baron accepted. Indeed, it was difficult to resist Fink's offer: even Anton acknowledged that. But the baron did not come to this resolve in a straightforward way. His mind underwent many oscillations. It was disagreeable to him to let a stranger make so considerable a profit out of lands of his; and when he had confessed with a sigh that it was impossible to prevent this, it was further disagreeable to him that Fink should have ventured upon such a proposition as this the third day after his arrival; and he felt that Lenore's continued opposition was well-grounded. At these times he saw himself poor, dependent, under Anton's management, and was imbittered almost to the point of giving up the plan. But, after such divergences, he always came back to the main point —his own interest. He knew well how great a help the rent paid beforehand would be during the current year, and he foresaw that the outlay of capital would, in the course of a few years, double the value of the estate. Then he could not but admit to himself that, at the present disturbed time, Fink would be a desirable associate. However, he preserved a rigid silence toward his wife and daughter; good-naturedly threw back Lenore's attempts to bring him to a decision; and was more dignified than usual in bearing during this period of deliberation.

After a few days he called his old servant, and said, in strict confidence, "Find out, John, when Mr. Wohlfart goes out, and Herr von Fink remains alone in his room, and then go to the latter and announce me to him."

The baron being accordingly privately introduced into Fink's apartment, told him in a friendly way that he accepted his offer, and left it to him to get the contract drawn up by the Rosmin attorney.

"All right," said Fink, shaking hands with him; "but have you reflected, baron, that your kind consent obliges me to claim your hospitality for weeks, if not months? for I consider my presence desirable, at all events till the farming operations are fairly set going."

"I shall be delighted," replied the baron, "if you will put up with our unsettled establishment. I shall take the liberty of setting apart some rooms for you. If you have a servant to whom you are accustomed, pray send for him."

"I want no servant," said Fink, "if you will desire your John to keep my room in order; but I have something better from which I don't like to be long parted—a fine half-blood, which is at present standing in my father's stable."

"Would it not be possible to have the horse sent over here?"

"If you would allow it," said Fink, "I shall be very grateful to you."

Thus the two concluded their treaty in perfect amity, and the baron left the room with the comfortable impression of having made a clever bargain.

"The matter is settled," said Fink to Anton, on the return of the latter. "Make no lamentations, for the mischief is done. I shall settle myself in two rooms in a corner of this wing, and see to the furnishing of them myself. To-morrow I am off to Rosmin, and farther still. I am on the scent of an experienced man who can overlook the undertaking, and I shall bring him and a few laborers back with me. Can you spare me our Karl for a week or so?"

"He is not easily spared; but, since it must be so, I will do what I can to replace him. You must leave me abundant instructions."

The next morning Fink rode away, accompanied by the hussar, and things returned to their old course. The drill went on regularly; patrols were sent around as before; frightful reports were greedily listened to and repeated. Sometimes small detachments of military appeared, and the officers were welcome guests at the castle, telling as they did of the strife going on beyond the forest, and comforting the ladies by bold assurances that the insurrection would soon be put down. Anton was the only one who felt the heavy burden on the family funds that their entertainment involved.

Nearly a fortnight had passed away, and Fink and Karl were still absent. One sunny day, Lenore was busy enlarging her plantation, where about fifty young firs and birches already made some show. In her straw hat, a small spade in her hand, she seemed so lovely to Anton as he was hurrying by that he could not resist standing still to look at her.

"I have you, then, at last, faithless sir," cried Lenore; "for a whole week you have never given my trees a thought;

I have been obliged to water them all alone. There is your spade, so come at once and help me to dig."

Anton obediently took the spade and valiantly began to turn up the sods.

"I have seen some young junipers in the wood; perhaps you can make use of them," said he.

"Yes; on the edge of the plantation," answered Lenore, appeased.

"I have had more to do these last days than usual," continued he. "We miss Karl every where."

Lenore struck her spade deep in the ground, and bent down to examine the upturned earth. "Has not your friend written to you yet?" inquired she, in a tone of indifference.

"I hardly know what to think of his silence," said Anton; "the mails are not interrupted, and other letters come. I almost fear that some misfortune may have happened to the travelers."

Lenore shook her head. "Can you imagine any misfortune happening to Herr von Fink?" inquired she, digging away.

"It is, indeed, difficult to imagine," said Anton, laughing; "he does not look as if he would easily allow any ill luck to settle down upon him."

"I should think not," replied Lenore, curtly.

Anton was silent for a while. "It is singular that we should not yet have talked over the change that Fink's remaining here will occasion," said he, at length, not without some constraint, for he had a vague consciousness that a certain degree of embarrassment had risen up on Lenore's side as well as his own—a light shadow on the bright grass, cast no one knows from whence. "Are you, too, satisfied with his sojourn here?"

Lenore turned away and twisted a twig in her fingers. "Are you satisfied?" asked she, in return.

"For my part," said Anton, "I may well be pleased with the presence of my friend."

"Then I am so too," replied Lenore, looking up; "but it really is strange that Mr. Sturm should not have written either. Perhaps," exclaimed she, "they will never return."

"I can answer for Karl," said Anton.

"But the other? He looks as changeable as a cloud."

"He is not that," replied Anton; "if he has difficulties to contend with, all the energy of his nature awakes; he is only bored by what gives him no trouble."

Lenore was silent, and dug on more zealously than ever. Just then a hum of cheerful voices sounded from the farm-yard, and the laborers ran from their dinner to the road. "Mr. Sturm is coming," cried one of them to the diggers. A stately procession was seen moving through the village toward the castle. First of all came half a dozen men all dressed alike, in gray jackets, wearing broad-brimmed felt hats set on one side, and decorated with a green sprig, a light gun on their shoulder, and a sailor's cutlass at their sides. Behind them came a series of loaded wagons: the first full of shovels, spades, rakes, and wheelbarrows symmetrically arranged; the latter laden with sacks of meal, chests, bundles of clothes, and household furniture. The procession was closed by a number of men dressed like those above described. As they neared the castle, Karl and a stranger sprang down from the last wagon; the former placed himself at the head of the procession, had the wagons driven to the front of the castle, arranged the men in two rows, and made them present arms. Last of all came Fink galloping up.

"Welcome!" cried Anton to his friend.

"You are bringing an army and ammunition," laughed Lenore, greeting him. "Do you always march with such heavy baggage?"

"I bring a corps that will henceforth be in your service," replied Fink, jumping down. "They seem decent folk," said he, turning to Anton; "but I had some trouble to collect them. Hands are scarce just now, and yet nothing gets done. We have been drumming and bribing in your country like recruiting sergeants. These fellows would hardly have been got here merely to work; the gray jackets and the chasseurs' caps settled the matter. Some of them have served already, and your hussar knows how to keep them together as well as any born general."

The baron and his lady now entered the court. The laborers, at Karl's bidding, raised a loud hurrah, and then strolled off to the side of the castle and lay down in the sunshine.

"Here are your pioneers, my chief," said Fink to the baron; "since your kindness allows me to be your inmate for some time to come, I have now a right to do something toward the security of your castle. The condition of this province is serious. Even in Rosmin they do not feel safe for a single day; and your imbodying a militia has not escaped the enemy, and called attention to your house."

"It is an honor to me," interposed the baron, "to be obnoxious to the rebels."

"No doubt," politely chimed in Fink. "But this is only an additional motive to your friends to watch over your and your family's personal safety. As yet you are hardly strong enough to defend the castle from an assault of the rascals immediately around. The dozen laborers that I bring will form a guard for your house; they have arms, and partly know how to use them. I have bound them to the performance of certain military functions which will help to keep them in order. They can work a few hours less daily, and exercise during the interval, patrol, and, in so far as you, baron, may think it desirable, keep up a regular correspondence with the neighboring districts. Of course their support and payment is my affair, and I have accordingly provided for it. I wish to run up a slight building for them on the land they are to cultivate, but just now it will be well to keep them as near the castle as possible, and therefore I have to ask you for temporary quarters for all these as well as for myself."

"Just as you like, dear Fink," cried the baron, carried away by the young man's enterprising spirit; "all the room we have is at your disposal."

"Then allow me to suggest," said Anton, "that a room in the lower story should be fitted up as a guard-room. There arms and implements can be safely kept, and some of the men might nightly take up their quarters there. The rest must be billeted in the farm-yard. In this way they will get accustomed to consider the castle their place of rendezvous."

"Capital," said Fink, "so that the disturbance thus caused does not prove an annoyance to the ladies."

"The wife and daughter of an old soldier will gratefully submit to any measures taken for their safety," replied the baron, with dignity.

Accordingly, the new colony began to settle by universal consent. The wagons were unloaded, the manager and his men accommodated for the moment in the farm buildings.

The first thing they did was to free the furniture from its wrappings of straw and canvas, and to carry it into the apartments of their new master.

The castle servants stood round and looked with curiosity at its simple style. One article, however, excited such loud admiration, that Lenore joined the group of gazers. It was a small sofa of singular aspect. The legs and arms were made

of the feet of some great beast of prey, and the cushions were covered with the bright yellow skin, all dotted over with regular black spots. At the back and on the bolsters were three large jaguars' heads, and the framework, instead of wood, was of beautifully carved ivory.

"How exquisite!" exclaimed Lenore.

"If the thing does not displease you," said Fink, coolly, "I propose an exchange. There is a small sofa in my room, on which I rest so comfortably that I should like to keep it there. Will you allow your people to carry off this monster to some other room in the castle, and to leave me that sofa instead?"

Lenore could find no reply, and bowed a silent consent; and yet she was dissatisfied with herself for not having at once declined such an exchange. When she returned to her room, she found the jaguar-sofa already there. That vexed her still further. She called Suska and the man-servant, and desired them to move it elsewhere; but they so loudly protested that the beautiful creature was nowhere more in keeping than in their young lady's chamber, that Lenore, to avoid observation, sent them away and put up with the exchange. Thus it came to pass that her fair form rested on the jaguar-skins that Fink had shot in the far forests of the West.

The next day the new undertaking began. The manager went with his apparatus to the land in question, and the men had their work portioned out to them. Karl hunted out day-laborers from the German and Polish districts around, and even found a few in the village ready to help, so that in a few days there were fifty hands employed. It must be owned that things did not go on altogether undisturbed; the laborers came less regularly than might have been wished, but still the work progressed, for Fink as well as Karl well understood keeping men in order—the one by his haughty energy, the other by the invariable good-humor with which he praised or blamed. The forester came assiduously from his forest to conduct the military exercises, the castle was nightly watched, and patrols regularly sent to the villages around. A warlike spirit spread from the castle over the whole district. A strong *esprit de corps* soon sprang up among the broadbrims, which made discipline easy, and after a few days Fink was besieged with petitioners for a like uniform, and a gun, and the privilege of being taken into his service.

"The guard-room is ready," said Fink to Anton; "but

you must have holes for muskets cut in the shutters of the lower story windows." Thus the troublous time was endured with fresh spirit. The stranger-guest gave a new impulse to each individual life; the very farm-servants felt his influence, and the forester was proud to do the honors of his wood to such a gentleman. Fink was a good deal in the woods with Anton, who, as well as Karl, soon fell into the habit of asking his advice. He bought two strong cart-horses—for his own use, he said—but he cleverly contrived that they should work on the baron's farm, and laughed at Anton's scruples. The latter was happy to have his friend near him. Somewhat of their former pleasant life had returned—of those evenings when the two youths had chatted, as only youths can, sometimes in mere childish folly, sometimes gravely on the highest subjects. Fink had changed in many respects. He had become more quiet, or, as Anton expressed it in counting-house phrase, more solid; but he was more inclined than ever to make use of men for his own varying interests, and to look down upon them as mere instruments. His physical strength was unabated. After having stood all morning superintending his workmen—after having wandered all through the wood with the forester, ridden, spite of Anton's remonstrances, far into the disturbed districts to seek information or establish relations there, and inspected on his return all the sentry-posts on the estate, there he was at the tea-table of the baroness, a lively companion, with such inexhaustible funds of conversation that Anton had often to remind him by signs that the strength of the lady of the house was not equal to his own. As for the baron, Fink had completely subjugated him. He never showed the least deference to the sarcastic humor which had become habitual to the unfortunate nobleman, never allowed him a bitter observation against Wohlfart or Lenore, or any one else, without making him at once sensible of its injustice. Consequently, the baron learned to exercise great self-control in his presence. On the other hand, Fink took pains to give him many a pleasure. He helped him to play a rubber of whist, initiated Lenore in the game, and gradually drew in Wohlfart as the fourth.

This had the effect of pleasantly whiling away many a weary hour for the baron; of making Wohlfart one of the family circle, and keeping him up, so that Fink might, if so minded, drink a glass of Cognac punch and enjoy his last cigar in his company. The ladies of the house alone did not seem to feel

the cheering influence of Fink's presence. The baroness fell sick; it was no violent ailment, yet it came suddenly. That very afternoon she had spoken cheerfully to Anton, and taken from him some letters which the postman had brought for her husband, but in the evening she did not make her appearance at the tea-table, though the baron himself treated her indisposition as trifling. She complained of nothing but weakness, and the doctor, who ventured from Rosmin to the castle, could not give her malady a name. She smilingly rejected all medicine, and said it was her firm conviction that the exhaustion would pass away. That she might not detain her husband and daughter in her sick-room, she often expressed a wish to join the family circle, but she was not able to sit up on the sofa, and lay resting her head on the pillows. Thus she was still the silent companion of the others. Her eyes would dwell uneasily upon the baron, or searchingly upon Lenore, as they sat at the whist-table, and then she would close them and seem to rest, as if from some great exertion.

Anton looked with sincere sympathy at the invalid. Whenever there was a pause in the game, he took the opportunity of quietly stepping to the sofa and asking her commands. It was a pleasure to him to hand her even a glass of water, or take a message for her. He gazed with admiration at the delicate face, which, pale and thin as it was, retained all its beauty of outline. There was a silent understanding between the two. She spoke, indeed, less to him than to the rest; for while she often addressed her husband in a cheerful tone, or followed Fink's lively narratives with looks and gestures of interest, she did not take the trouble of hiding her weakness from Anton. Alone with him, she would collapse or gaze absently straight before her; but when she did look at him, it was with the calm confidence with which we are inspired by an old friend from whom we have no longer any secrets. Perhaps this arose from the baroness being able fully to appreciate his worth—perhaps, too, it arose from her never having looked at him in any other light than that of an obliging domestic since he first promised his services; but had this view of hers been discernible to our hero, it would in no way have shaken his allegiance to the noble lady. She seemed to him perfect, just as she was—a picture that rejoiced the heart of all who came within its influence. He could not get rid of the impression that some external cause, perhaps one of those letters he had himself given her, was answerable for the change

in her health; for one of them was directed in a trembling hand, and had an unpleasant look about it, which had made Anton instinctively feel that it contained bad news. One evening, while the others were at the card-table, the invalid's head sunk down from the silken cushions; Anton having arranged them more comfortably, she looked at him gratefully, and told him in a whisper how weak she was. "I wish to speak with you once more alone," continued she, after a pause; "not now, but the time will come;" and then she looked upward with an expression of anguish that filled Anton's heart with painful fears.

Neither the baron nor Lenore, however, shared his anxiety.

"Mamma has often suffered from similar attacks of weakness before," said the latter. "The summer is her best cure, and I hope every thing from warmer weather."

But indeed Lenore was too preoccupied to be a good judge of what was going on around her. She too was changed. Many an evening she would sit mute at the tea-table, and start if addressed; at other times she would be immoderately lively. She avoided Fink; she avoided Anton too, and was reserved in manner to both. Her blooming health appeared disturbed; her mother would often send her out of doors from her own sick-room; and then she would have her pony saddled, and ride round and round the wood, till the indignant pony would take her home without her finding it out. Anton saw this change with silent sorrow. He was deeply conscious how different Lenore's relation to him had become, but he did not speak of this to her, and kept his feelings to himself.

It was a sultry afternoon in May. Dark thunder-clouds hung over the forest, and the sun threw its burning rays on the parched land, when the patrol which had been sent to Kunau came hurrying back to the guard-room to say that there were strange men lurking in the Kunau woods, and that the villagers wished to know what was to be done. Fink gave the alarm to his laborers, and sent a messagé to the forester and to the new farm. While the men carried the implements into the castle, and the farm-servants rode home with teams and prepared for a sally, a horseman came from Kunau to say that a band of Poles had broken into a court-yard in the village, and that the peasants requested help. All were now in the cheerful excitement which an alarm occasions when it promises adventures.

"Keep some of the workmen back," said Fink to Anton,

"and guard the castle and village. I will send the forester with his little militia to Kunau, and ride over thither myself first of all, with Karl and the servants."

He sprang to the stable and saddled his own horse, while Karl was getting ready that of the baron for himself.

"Look at the clouds, Herr von Fink," said Karl. "Take your cloak with you; we shall have a tremendous shower."

Fink called accordingly for his plaid, and the little band galloped off toward Kunau. When they entered the forest they remarked how stifling the atmosphere was. Even the rapid pace of their horses brought with it no relief.

"Look how restless the beasts are," said Karl. "My horse pricks his ears. There is something in the wood."

They stopped for a moment. "I hear a horse's tread, and a rustling among the branches."

The horse that Karl rode stretched out his neck and neighed loudly.

"It is an acquaintance—one of our own number," said Fink, looking at the animal. The branches of the young trees parted, and Lenore, mounted on her pony, sprang out and barred the way. "Halt! who goes there?" cried she, laughing.

'Hurrah! the young lady!" exclaimed Karl.

"The password?" cried Lenore, in true martial style.

Fink rode up, saluted her, and whispered, "*Potz Blitz, das ist ja die Gustel von Blasewitz.*"

Lenore blushed and laughed. "All right," said she; "I shall ride with you."

"Of course," cried Fink; "only let's go on."

The pony exerted himself to keep up with the tall horse of the stranger, and thus they reached Kunau and stopped at the rendezvous, where the village militia was assembled; and its commander, the smith, met the riders with an anxious face.

"Those hidden in our wood," cried he, "are an accursed set—armed Poles. This very day, in broad noonlight, a band of the men, carrying guns, came to Leonard's farm, which lies out there by the wood, invested the doors and gate, while their leader and some of the men marched into the room where the farmer and his family were sitting, and demanded money and the calf out of the stable. He was a blackguard fellow, with a long gun, a peacock feather in his cap, and a red scarf around his loins, like a thorough Klopice. The farmer refused to give up his money, at which they took aim at him; and his wife,

in terror, ran to the closet, and threw all the money they had at the rascals. Next, they carried away the geese from the yard, and went off with their booty into the wood, leaving four rogues armed with guns to mount guard, and prevent any one getting off the premises till they were far enough. Next, two of the thieves discharged their guns into the roof, and then all ran away. The thatch took fire, but fortunately we got it put out."

"Hours have passed since then," cried Fink; "the rogues are over the mountains by this time."

"I do not think so," replied the smith. "I at once sent off Leonard to the border with our mounted men, that they might watch whether the thieves crept out of the wood or not, and a woman who crossed it two hours ago saw Poles there. They had some beast with them too, but the woman was too much terrified to know whether it was a calf or a dog; if it were a calf, the hungry wolves would rather eat it than carry it farther. I have just come from Neudorf; the men there are assembled like ourselves. We might make a search through the forest if your people would help us, and if you would show us the way." "Good," said Fink; let us set about it." He then sent a message to the forester to the effect that those in the castle should set out on the search from their side, and discussed with the smith the best way of disposing the Kunau men. He next dispatched Karl and the servants to join the Kunau horsemen on the opposite side of the wood. "Don't stand upon ceremony with the rascals," he called out after Karl, with a significant tap on his pistols. "Now, then," said he to the smith, "I will go to Neudorf. When you have searched your half of the wood, wait for us; you shall then be joined by the Neudorf detachment."

The Kunau men set off accordingly to avenge the robbery committed. Fink, accompanied by Lenore, rode off to the neighboring village. On the way thither, he said, "At Neudorf we must part, lady." Lenore was silent.

Fink glanced sidelong at her. "I don't think," said he, "that the rogues will do us the pleasure of awaiting our approach; and if they are minded to run off, the evening is closing in, and we shall hardly hinder them; but the chase will be good practice for our people, and therefore we must make the most of it."

"Then I will go with you to the wood," said Lenore, resolutely.

"That is hardly necessary," replied Fink. "True, I fear no risk for you, but fatigue, and probably rain."

"Let me go with you!" prayed Lenore, looking up at him. "I have given you sensible advice; what more can be demanded from any one?"

"Between ourselves, I am rejoiced to find you so spirited. Gallop then, comrade!"

Arrived at Neudorf, Fink left the horses in the bailiff's stable, and led the band of villagers to the borders of the wood. There they deployed into a *cordon*, and the march now began; Fink walked with Lenore at the head of the right wing, which, according to the plan laid down, would be the first to join the Kunau detachment. All went silently onward, and looked with keen glance from tree to tree. As they got farther into the wood, there was a rustling in the tops of the trees, and looking through them, a leaden-colored sky was seen; but below, the sultriness was undisturbed, the birds sat supinely on the branches, and the beetles had crept into the heather.

"The very sky is on the side of these rogues," said Fink, pointing out the clouds to his companion; "it is getting so dark up there that in half an hour's time we shall not be able to see ten yards before us."

The forest now thickened and the light decreased. Lenore had some difficulty in discerning the men before her. The ground grew swampy, and she sank up to her ankles. "If only no cold be caught," laughed Fink. "None will," replied she, cheerfully; but the forest expedition no longer appeared to her the easy matter it had done an hour before.

The man nearest to Fink stood still, his whispered word of command ran along the whole chain, and all stopped to wait for the Kunau men. The sky grew still blacker, the wood still darker. The thunder began to roll in the distance, hollow and muffled, beneath the fir-wood arches. At first the rain sounded only on the tree-tops, but soon large, heavy drops came down, till at length all view was shut out by the sheets of water that fell. Each individual was isolated by darkness and rain, and when the men called to each other, they were hardly audible.

At that moment Lenore, as she looked at Fink, caught her foot in the root of a tree, and suppressing a cry of anguish, sank on one knee. Fink hastened to her.

"I can go no farther," said she, conquering her pain; "leave me here, I beseech you, and call for me on your return."

"To leave you in this condition," cried Fink, "would be barbarity, compared to which cannibalism is a harmless recreation. You will be good enough to put up with my proximity. But first of all allow me to lead you out of this shower-bath to some spot where the rain is less audacious; and, besides, I have already lost sight of our men; not one of the worthy fellows' broad shoulders can I now discern." He raised Lenore, who tried to use the injured foot, but the pain extorted another cry of agony. She tottered, and leaned against Fink's shoulder. Winding his plaid about her, he lifted her from the ground, and carried her, as one carries a child, underneath some fir-trees, whose thick branches spread over a small dry space. Any one stooping might find tolerable shelter there.

"I must set you down here, dear lady," said Fink, carefully placing Lenore on the ground. "I will keep watch before your green tent, and turn my back to you, that you may bind your wet handkerchief round the naughty ankle."

Lenore squeezed herself in under the fir canopy. Fink stood leaning against the trunk of a tree.

"Is nothing broken?" said he; "can you move the foot?"

"It hurts me," said Lenore, "but I can move it."

"That is well," said Fink, looking straight before him; "now bind the handkerchief round it; I hope that in ten minutes you will be able to stand. Wrap yourself up well in the large plaid; it will keep you warm; else my comrade will catch a fever, and that would be paying too dear for the chase after the stolen calf. Have you arranged the bandage?"

"Yes," said Lenore.

"Then allow me to wrap you up." It was in vain that she protested; Fink wound the large shawl round and round her, and tied it behind in a firm knot. "Now you may sit in the wood like the gray manikin."

"Leave me a little breathing space," implored Lenore.

"There, then," said Fink; "now you will be comfortable."

Indeed, Lenore soon began to feel a genial warmth, and sat silent in her shady nook, distressed at the singular position in which she found herself. Meanwhile Fink had again taken up his post against the tree-trunk, and chivalrously kept aloof. After a time Lenore called out of her hiding-place, "Are you there still, comrade mine?"

"Do you take me for a traitor who forsakes his tent-companion?" returned Fink.

"It is quite dry here," continued Lenore, "only that a drop

falls now and then upon my nose; but you, poor you, will be wet through out there. What fearful rain!"

"Does this rain terrify you?" inquired Fink, shrugging his shoulders. "It is but a weak infant, this. If it can break off a twig from a tree, it thinks it has done wonders. Commend me to the rain of warmer climates. Drops like apples—nay, not drops at all, streams as thick as my arm! The water rushes down from the clouds like a cataract. No standing, for the ground swims away beneath one's feet: no taking shelter under a tree, for the wind breaks the thickest trunks like straw. One runs to his house, which is not farther off, perhaps, than from here to that good for nothing stump that hurt your foot, and the house has vanished, leaving in its place a hole, a stream, and a heap of well-washed stones. Perhaps, too, the earth may begin to shake a little, and to raise waves like those of the sea in a storm. That is a rain which is worth seeing. Clothes that have been wet through by it never recover; what was once a great-coat is, after a whole week's drying, nothing more than a black and shapeless mass—in aspect and texture like to a morel. If one chances to be wearing such a coat, it sticks on fast enough indeed, but it never can be got off except by the help of a penknife, and in narrow strips, peeled away as one peels an apple!"

Lenore could not help laughing in spite of pain. "I should much like to have experience of such a rain as that," said she.

"I am unselfish in not wishing to see you in such a plight," replied Fink. "Ladies fare worst of all. All that constitutes their toilette vanishes entirely in torrents such as these. Do you know the costume of the Venus of Milo?"

"No," said Lenore, distressed.

"All women caught in a tropical rain look exactly like that lady, and the men like scarecrows. Nay, sometimes it happens that human beings are beaten down flat as penny-pieces, with a knob in the middle, which, on closer examination, proves to be a human head, and mournfully calls out to passers-by, 'Oh, my fellow-beings, this is what comes of going out without an umbrella!'"

Again Lenore could not help laughing. "My foot no longer hurts me so much; I believe that I could walk."

"That you shall not do," replied Fink. "The rain has not abated, and it is so dark that one can hardly see one's outstretched hand."

"Then do me the kindness of going to look for the others.

I am better now, and I crouch here like a roe, hidden alike from rain and robbers."

"It won't do," rejoined Fink from his tree.

"I implore you to do so," cried Lenore, anxiously, stretching out her hands from the plaid. "Leave me now alone." Fink turned round, seized her hand, pressed it to his lips, and silently hurried off in the direction the men had taken.

Lenore now sat alone beneath the fir-tree. The rain still rushed down, and the thunder rolled above her, and at times a sudden flash showed her the two long rows of trunks, looking like the yellow pillars of an unfinished building, a black roof over them. At such moments the forest seemed like an enchanted castle, rising out of the earth and sinking into nothingness again. Mysterious tones, such as fill the woods by night, sounded through the rain. Over her head there was a knocking at regular intervals, as if some wicked wood-sprite were seeking admittance to her shelter, which made her start, and ask herself whether it proceeded from a spectre or the branch of a tree. Farther off was heard the vehement croaking of some crow whose nest had been flooded, and whose first sleep was disturbed. Close to her there was ghastly laughter. "Hee, hee! hoo, hoo!" and again Lenore started. Was it a malicious forest kobold, or only a night-owl? Nature spoke around her in a hundred melancholy tones. Lenore sometimes enjoyed, and sometimes trembled at the wild charm of this solitude. Other thoughts, too, passed through her mind: she blamed herself for having foolishly stolen out to join an undertaking that made such a result as this possible; she pictured to herself how they were seeking for her at home; and, above all, wondered what he who had just left her, at her earnest request, was thinking of her in his inmost heart. Pushing back the plaid, she listened, but there was not a human voice to be heard; nothing but the fall of the rain and the sighing of the wood. But near her something moved. At first she heard it indistinctly, then plainly as in leaps it came closer, and presently she felt something press against her plaid. Terrified, she cautiously reached out her hand, and touched the wet skin of a hare, who, scared from its form by the incessant rain, now sought shelter like herself. She held her breath not to disturb her little companion, and for a while the two cowered side by side.

Then shots sounded afar off through the rain and thunder. Lenore started, and the hare bounded away. Yonder there

were men fighting; yonder, blood was being poured out on the dark ground. A scream was heard — a fierce, ominous scream, then all was still. "Was he in danger?" she asked herself; yet she felt no fear, and shook her head under her plaid, sure that, even if he were, no danger would reach him: the gun aimed at him would strike some broken branch, the knife drawn against him would break like a splinter before it struck him, the man who rushed on him would stumble and fall before he could touch that haughty head. He was above all danger, above all fear; he knew neither care nor grief; alas! he did not feel like other men. His head was lifted freely, his eyes were clear and bright when all others were cast in terror down to earth. No difficulty affrighted, no hinderance stopped him. With a mere wave of his hand he could remove what crushed other men. Such was he. And this man had seen her weak, precipitate, and helpless; it was her own fault that he had now a right to assume a transient intimacy. She trembled lest he should presume upon this right by a glance, a presumptuous smile, a passing word. In this way her heart kept beating and her thoughts fluttering for long hours.

The storm passed off. Instead of torrents there was small rain, and a dull gray succeeded to the black darkness and the fiery flashes. Lenore could now trace the trunk of the nearest trees. The feeling of solitariness oppressed her more and more. Just then she heard again the distant sound of human voices, call and counter-call grew louder, and the bailiff's voice cried, "They went beyond the quarry; look yonder, you Neudorf men." The steps of the speakers drew near, and Karl, making a speaking trumpet of his hands, shouted with all his might, "Halloa, hillo hoa, Fräulein Lenore!"

"Here I am," cried a female voice at his very feet.

Karl started back in amazement, and joyfully called out, "Found!" The peasants surrounded Lenore's shelter.

"Our young lady is here!" cried a youth of Neudorf, and hurraed in his delight as though he were at a wedding.

Lenore rose; her foot still pained her; but, leaning on Karl's arm, she exerted herself bravely to walk. Meanwhile the young men broke down a few poles, and laid fir branches across them. In spite of her resistance, Lenore was constrained to seat herself upon the rude litter, while some ran on to the bailiff's stable to get her horse ready for her.

"Have you found the thieves?" inquired Lenore from Karl, who walked at her side.

"Two of them," replied he. "The calf had been killed; we have got its skin and part of its flesh. The geese were hanging up on a bough, with their necks wrung, but the rascals had divided the money. We found very little of it on our prisoners."

"Those we have caught are Tarow men," said the bailiff, anxiously; "the worst in the village. And yet I wish they were any where but here, for there are some desperately revengeful fellows yonder."

"I heard shots," inquired Lenore, further; "was any harm done?"

"Not to us," answered Karl. "In their foolhardiness they made a fire, not much beyond the border where our riders formed a *cordon*. The embers were glimmering in spite of the rain, and thus they betrayed themselves. We dismounted, crept near, and surprised them. They fired their guns and ran into the bush. There the darkness swallowed them up. It was a long time before the party on foot could join us, and but for the shots and the noise they would never have found us out. Herr von Fink described to us the place where we should meet with you. He is taking the prisoners with him to the estate, and to-morrow we will send them farther."

"But to think that Herr von Fink should have left you thus alone in the wood!" said the worthy bailiff: "that was a bold stroke indeed."

"I begged him not to remain behind," cried Lenore, casting down her eyes in spite of the darkness.

Half way to the village Lenore's pony was brought to meet them. At Neudorf, Karl got back the baron's horse and accompanied his young lady to the castle. It was very late before they arrived. Lenore's long absence had excited her mother's alarm, and put the baron fearfully out of temper. She escaped from his cross-questioning as fast as she could, and hurried to her room. An hour later, Fink, with the forester, came back from Kunau, bringing both the prisoners, who walked haughtily, with their hands bound, and carried their peacock's feathers as high as though they were leading the dance in a tavern.

"You shall pay for this," said one of them in Polish to his escort, and clenched his fettered fists.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The rain still continued. It had ceased indeed in the morning, but only to begin again with double energy. The laborers had gone early to the field, but they soon returned. They were now sitting silently in the guard-room of the castle, drying their wet garments at the stove.

The baron sat in the arm-chair, listening to old John, who read him the newspaper that had reached the castle on the previous day. The monotonous voice of the domestic announced nothing but unwelcome news; the rain-drops rattled on the panes, and the wind rushed howling round the corner of the house in discordant accompaniment.

Anton was busy at his desk. Before him lay a letter from Commissary Horn, announcing that the judicial sale of the family estate was fixed for the middle of next winter; and that, since the advertisement of this definite period, several mortgages on the property had passed from one hand to another, bought up, as he feared, by one speculator, who disguised himself under different names. Accordingly, Anton reflected in gloomy mood upon the hazardous position of the baron.

In the neighboring room Fink was keeping the ladies company, the baroness lying back on the sofa cushions, covered by a shawl of Lenore's. She gazed in silence straight before her, but when her daughter came up with some tender inquiry, she nodded smilingly at her, and spoke a few cheering words. Lenore was sitting in the window occupied with some light work, and listening with rapture to the jests by which Fink brightened the otherwise mournful room. To-day, in spite of the rain, he was in the wildest spirits. From time to time Lenore's ringing laugh reached Anton through the massive door, and then he forgot sale and mortgage, looked with clouded brow at the door, and felt, not without bitterness, that a new struggle was approaching both for the family and for himself.

Without, as we have already said, the rain poured and the storm raged. The wind from the forest wailed to the castle. The old firs creaked, and ceaselessly bent down their branches

toward the building. Around the pear-trees in the meadows leaves and white blossoms fluttered timidly to earth. The storm angrily stripped them off, and crushed them low with his rain, howling the while. "Down with your smiling pomp! to-day all belonging to the castle shall wear mourning." Then the fierce spirit flew from the trees to the castle walls; it shook the flag-staff on the tower; it hurled the rain in slanting torrents against the windows; it groaned in the chimneys and thundered at the doors. It took advantage of every opening to cry, "Guard your house!" And this it did for hours together, but those within understood not its speech.

Neither did any one heed the horseman who was urging his weary horse through the village to the castle. At last the knocker outside the gate was heard, the strokes sounded impatient, and loud voices resounded in the court-yard and on the stairs. Anton opened the door; an armed man, dripping with wet and stained with mud, entered the room.

"It is you!" cried Anton, in amazement.

"They are coming," said Karl, looking cautiously round; "prepare for it; this time it is our turn."

"The enemy?" rapidly asked Anton. "How strong is the band?"

"It was not a band that I saw," replied Karl, seriously; "it was an army of about a thousand scythe-bearers, and at least a hundred horsemen at their head. I hear that they have orders to enlist all Poles and disarm all Germans."

Anton opened the door of the next room and made a sign to Fink.

"Ah!" cried Fink, as he cast a look on Karl, "he who brings half the highway into the room with him has no good tidings to tell. From which side comes the enemy, sergeant?"

"From the Neudorf birch wood straight down upon us. Our villagers are assembled in the tavern drinking and quarreling."

"No beacon-fires have been seen—no tidings have come from the neighboring villages," cried Anton at the window. "Have the Germans at Neudorf and Kunau been fast asleep, then?"

"They were taken by surprise," continued the messenger of ill. "Their watch saw the enemy yesterday evening half a mile beyond Neudorf, going down the high road toward Rosmin. When they had passed the turning to Neudorf, the villagers took heart again, but their horsemen followed the en-

emy till the last scythe-bearers were out of sight. In the night, however, the whole troop turned back; this morning they fell upon the village, and wrought sad havoc there. The bailiff is lying on the straw, covered with wounds, and a prisoner; the guard-house is burned down; but for this heavy rain we should see the smoke. At this present moment the enemy has divided. They are making the round of all the German villages: one party has gone off to Kunau, one to our new farm, the largest is on its way hither."

"How much time have we to prepare for these gentry?" asked Fink.

"In weather like this, the infantry will take an hour to get here."

"Is the forester warned?" asked Anton; "and do those at the new farm know?"

"There was no time to apprise them. The farm is farther from Neudorf than the estate, and I might have been too late getting here. I lit our beacon, but in rain like this, neither fire nor smoke is visible, and all signals are useless."

"If they have not looked out for themselves," said Fink, decidedly, "we can do no more for them."

"The forester is a fox," replied Karl; "no one will catch him; but as to the farmer and his young wife, Heaven have mercy on them!"

"Save our people!" cried a supplicating voice close to Fink. Lenore stood in the room, pale, with folded hands.

Anton hurried to the door through which she had silently entered. "The baroness!" cried he, anxiously.

"She has heard nothing as yet," hurriedly replied Lenore. "Send to the farm; help our people!"

Fink caught up his cap. "Bring out my horse," said he to Karl.

"You can't be spared now," said Anton, barring the way. "I will take your horse."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Wohlfart," interpolated Karl; "if I may ride Herr von Fink's horse, I shall be quite able to make it out."

"So be it, then," decided Fink; "send hither the forester and any man you can beat up; the women, horses, and children you can dispatch to the forest. Let the farmer go with all his cattle into the thicket as far as he can, and keep a look-out on the castle from the old firs near the sand-pit. As for you, keep on my horse, which I shall, alas! have to make

over to you for some days to come; ride off to Rosmin, and seek out the nearest detachment of our soldiers; tell them we implore them to come to our aid, and, if possible, to bring cavalry with them."

"Our red-caps are about three miles beyond Rosmin," said Karl, turning to go. "The Kunau smith called that out to me as I rode by."

"Bring any military you can. I'll write a line to the commanding officer while you are saddling the horse."

Karl made a military salute, and hurried down stairs, Anton with him. While he was fastening the girths, Anton said, "As you pass by, call out to the men in the farm-yard that I will be with them at once. Poor fellow, you have hardly had any breakfast to-day, and there is little prospect of your getting any thing for some hours to come." He ran back to the house, got a bottle of wine, some bread, and the remnant of a ham, stuffed them into a bag, and, together with Fink's letter, gave them to the hussar just as he was setting off.

"Thanks," said Karl, seizing Anton's hand; "you think of every one. But I've one thing to ask: think of yourself too, Mr. Wohlfart; this Polish set, here and yonder, are not worth your risking your life; there are some at home with whom it would go hard if any thing happened to you."

Anton shook his hand heartily. "Good-by, Karl. I'll do my duty. Don't forget to send us the forester, and, above all, rescue the farmer's wife. Lead the military hither through the wood."

"No fear," said Karl, cheerily; "this gallant bay shall find out how much a stout-hearted trooper can get through."

With these words he waved his cap, and vanished behind the farm-buildings.

Anton bolted the gate, then hurried to the guard-room, and rang the alarm-bell, giving orders to the superintendent to let in the men, to invest the back door, and not to admit any one without questioning them, not even fugitives.

"Eat heartily and drink moderately; we shall have enough to do to-day," he cried.

Meanwhile Fink stood at the table in Anton's room, loading the guns, while Lenore reached him whatever he needed. She was pale, but her eyes glowed with an excitement which did not escape Anton as he entered. "Leave this serious game to us alone," said he, beseechingly.

"It is the home of my parents that you defend," cried she. "My father is unable to act at your head. You shall not expose your lives for our sakes without my sharing your danger."

"Forgive me," replied Anton; "your first duty most undoubtedly is to prepare the baroness, and not to leave her during the next few hours."

"My mother! my poor mother!" cried Lenore, clasping her hands, laying down the powder-flask, and hurrying to the neighboring room.

"I have set all the men eating," said Anton to Fink. "From this moment you must take the command."

"Good," replied Fink. "Here are your arms; this double-barrel is light; one barrel loaded with ball, the other with slugs. The bag of bullets is under your bed."

"You think of standing a siege, then?" inquired Anton.

"We must either not seek to defend ourselves at all, but surrender at the friendly discretion of the approaching band, or we must hold out to our last bullet. We are all prepared for the latter course; perhaps surrender would be the wiser, but I own it does not suit my taste. As there is a master of the house, however, still extant, he may decide; go to the baron."

Anton hurried through the passage to the other wing. Even when at a distance he could hear the chairs knocked about in the baron's room. There was an angry "Come in," and he entered. The baron was standing in the middle of the room, highly excited. "I hear," said he, "that there is something going on. I must consider it an unpardonable want of attention that I have not been apprised of it."

"Your pardon, baron," replied Anton; "we only heard a few minutes ago that a band of the enemy's cavalry and scythe-bearers was moving on toward your property. We sent off a messenger in all speed to the nearest military station, then bolted the door, and now we wait your orders."

"Send me Herr von Fink," replied the baron, authoritatively.

"He is at this moment in the guard-room."

"I beg that he will take the trouble of coming to me at once," cried the angry nobleman. "I can not discuss military matters with you. Fink is a gentleman, and half a soldier; I will give all necessary instructions to him. What are you waiting for?" rudely continued he. "Do you young people suppose that you are to trifle with me because I have the

misfortune to be blind? He at least whom I feed and pay shall respect my commands."

"Father!" cried Lenore, on the threshold, looking imploringly at Anton.

"You are right, baron," replied Anton; "I crave your forgiveness for having in the hurry of the moment forgotten my first duty. I will send Herr von Fink here at once." Then hastening off, he made his friend acquainted with the baron's angry mood.

"He is a fool," said Fink.

"Go up at once," urged Anton; "the ladies must not suffer from his temper." Then throwing on a laborer's jacket, he sprang out through the door into the rain and to the back farm-yard.

There he found a dreary scene of confusion. German families from the neighboring villages had taken refuge in the guard-house, and sat there with their children, and some of their goods and chattels round them. There were about twenty persons lying on the floor—men, women, and children, the women lamenting, the children weeping, the men looking gloomily down. Several of them belonged to the village militia, and some had their guns with them. Their little carts stood in the yard. Servants, horses, cows, were all running against each other. Anton called the superintendent to his assistance.

He next made over the farm-horses and the cattle to the most trustworthy of the servants, and to the German dairy-maid. Calling aside the head servant, a resolute kind of man, he described to him a place in the thicket, not far from the sand-pit, where man and beast might lie concealed, and be in some degree protected from the weather. Thither the man was to drive the cattle, and to keep a sharp look-out for the bailiff, who was to have the management of the wood-party. Next he desired the maid to leave a cow behind, opened the gate himself, and saw them all set out toward the forest.

"What are we to do with the horses of the baron and of Herr von Fink?" hurriedly asked the superintendent.

"They must be brought, together with some of the vehicles, into the court-yard, come what will. Who knows whether we shall not have to fly, after all?"

Accordingly, Anton had Karl's newly-painted carts laden with sacks of potatoes, meal, oats, and as much hay as they could hold. He had the great water-butt brought in too, and

filled to the brim with fresh water. The skies were still pouring down bucketfuls, and the servants had to load in the drenching rain. All was confusion; and weeping and cursing, in German and Polish, was heard on every side. As Anton approached the fugitives, the screams of the women grew louder, the men surrounded him and began to relate their disasters, the children clung about his knees: it was a mournful spectacle. Anton did what he could to comfort them. "Above all, be quiet; we will protect you as well as we can. I hope the military may come to our aid, meanwhile you will be safe in the castle. You have been faithful to us in this season of distress; as long as we have bread you shall not want."

After a quarter of an hour of extreme exertion Anton returned to the castle. The servants drove the carts to the back door, the troop of fugitives followed. People still poured in from the German villages around, and soon the smith of Kunau, with some of his near neighbors, stood at the castle gate. The whole party was now got into order, the horses unharnessed, the carts unloaded. The women and children were led by Anton into two rooms on the lower floor, which were dark indeed, but far more comfortable than the guard-house in the soaked fields. The bringing in the horses was the most troublesome part of the matter; about a dozen of them had to crowd up beneath an open shed, poorly protected from rain or bullets. The water-butt was placed in the middle of the yard, and the potato-carts pushed up to the paling, to serve, in case of need, as a position for the guard. Next, all the men capable of bearing arms were assembled by the smith, and, besides Fink's laborers and four servants, fifteen German peasants were mustered, the larger number of them armed. Their footsteps sounded heavy in the long passages, and joining the laborers in the hall, the whole force was seen at once, Fink in his hunting-coat walking quietly up and down before his own corps. Anton now went up to him and gave in his report.

"You bring us men," replied Fink; "that is all very well; but we did not want a whole clan of women and children into the bargain; the castle is as full as a bee-hive—more than sixty mouths, to say nothing of a dozen horses; spite of your potato-carts, we shall have to gnaw the stones before twenty-four hours are over."

"Could I leave them outside?" asked Anton, dryly.

"They would have been just as safe in the wood as here," said Fink, with a shrug.

"Possibly," replied Anton; "but to send off people to the forest in rain like this, without provisions, and in deadly terror, would have been barbarity for which I could not be responsible. Besides, do you think we should have got the men without their wives and children?"

"At all events, we can make use of the men," concluded Fink, "and you may manage the commissariat as you can."

Fink next gave arms to those who wanted them, and divided the forces into four sections, one for the yard, two for the upper and lower stories, and one as a reserve in the guard-room. Next he had an exact report of the enemy given him by the Kunau smith and others. Meantime Anton had rushed to the underground kitchen, where he gave the provisions in charge of the superintendent, and caused wood and water to be carried in by the baron's servants. A sack of potatoes and one of meal were placed near the hearth, and the great caldron put on the fire.

As he went out, he confided to the cook that a cow had been taken into the stable, that, at all events, the family might not be without milk at this doleful time. Old Barbette wrung her hands in anguish. "Alas! Mr. Wohlfart, what a frightful thing it is!" cried she; "the balls will be flying about in my kitchen."

"Heaven forbid!" said Anton; "the window is much too deep for that. No one can reach you; cook away in peace; the people are famished; I will send two of the stranger women down to help you."

"Who could eat in such danger as this?" cried she.

"We will all eat," said Anton, comfortingly.

"Will you have soup or potato-broth?" inquired Barbette, feverishly brandishing her spoon in her despair.

"Both, my good woman."

The cook held him back. "But, Mr. Wohlfart, there are no eggs for the family; indeed, there is not an egg in the whole house. Mercy on us! to think of this misfortune happening to-day, of all days. What will the baron say when he has no fresh egg this evening?"

"The devil take the eggs!" cried Anton, impatiently; "we must not be so particular to-day."

As he returned, Fink called to him, "All is ready; we may now quietly await their arrival. I am going to the tower, and taking a few good shots with me. If any thing happens, I am to be found there."

And again the hall was empty and the house quiet. The sentinels stood silently watching the edge of the forest; the rest of the men sat talking in a low voice in the guard-room; but the noise was unceasing in the apartment where the children were, and a constant communication was kept up between the kitchen and the occupied rooms in the lower story. Anton walked to and fro in restless suspense from the house to the court, and back again to his own room, where he tied the baron's papers together; then through the passages and to the guard-room. In this way one quarter of an hour after another passed, till at length Lenore came from her mother's room crying, "This uncertainty is intolerable!"

"And we have no tidings from the farm either," replied Anton, anxiously; "but the rain is over, and whatever happens to-day will happen in sunshine. The clouds are breaking yonder, and the blue sky is seen through them. How is the baroness?"

"She is calm," said Lenore, "and prepared for every thing."

Both walked silently up and down the hall. At last Lenore went up to Anton, and passionately exclaimed, "Wohlfart, it is horrible to me to think of you in a position such as this for our sakes."

"Is this position, then, so terrible?" asked Anton, with a mournful smile.

"You do not perhaps feel it so," said Lenore, "but you are sacrificing for us far more than we deserve. We are ungrateful to you; you would be happier elsewhere."

She placed herself at the window, and wept bitterly.

Anton tried to soothe her. "If," said he, "you allude to the hasty expressions of the baron, you need not pity me on that account. You know what we have formerly said on that subject."

"It is not that alone," cried Lenore, weeping.

Anton knew as well as she did that it was not that alone, and felt that a confession lay in the words. "Be it what it may," said he, cheerfully, "why should you grudge me the pleasure of an adventure? Certainly I am an inexperienced soldier, but it seems that our enemies will not give me much opportunity of doing them any harm to-day."

"No one thanks you for all that you bear for our sakes. No one!" cried Lenore.

"No one?" repeated Anton. "Have I not a friend here who is only too much inclined to overrate the little I am able

to do? Lenore, you have permitted me to draw nearer to you than would have been possible under ordinary circumstances. Do you reckon it nothing that I should have won some of a brother's privileges with regard to you?"

Lenore fervently seized and pressed his hand. "Even I have been different to you of late to what I should have been. I am very unhappy," cried she, passionately. "I can not tell to any human being what I feel—not to my mother—not to you either. I have lost all confidence and all control." She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Lenore!" cried her father, impatiently, from his apartment.

"This is no time for explanations," said she, more calmly. "When we have got over this day, I will try hard to be stronger than I am now. Help me in this, Wohlfart."

She hurried away to the baron's room. Anton remained behind, lost in sad thoughts. Meanwhile the bright sunshine streamed down on the court-yard, the men left the guard-room and stood on the threshold; even the women made their way out of their dark retreat, and had to be scolded back again.

"Who knows whether they have not overlooked the castle?" said one; "or if they have courage to attack us?" suggested another; while a sagacious tailor proved, by a clever *résumé* of the different reports received, that all the Polish frocks were by this time far beyond Rosmin. Yet, eagerly as each asserted that the danger must now be over, all listened anxiously to the step of the sentinels, and looked constantly to the tower, to see if any signal were given thence. Even Anton found the suspense unbearable, and at length he too betook himself to the tower. Here the whole staff was assembled. The blind baron sat in his arm-chair, behind him stood Lenore's tall figure shading his eyes with her parasol; four riflemen sat in the broad embrasures; and Fink, perched on the wall, hung down his legs into space, and puffed the blue clouds of a cigar into the wind.

"Nothing to be seen?" asked Anton.

"Nothing," replied Fink, "except a drunken band of our villagers, who are moving off on the Tarow road." He pointed to a dark mass just vanishing into the wood. "It is very well that we have got rid of the rabble. They are afraid of the gray-jackets, and are off to plunder elsewhere. Every hour's delay is a gain, since we reckon that at best there is no help to be looked for till to-morrow. Now those gentlemen behind the wood are not interesting enough to wish for a visit

of twenty-four hours from them. This is a grand spot, Baron Rothsattel," continued Fink. "Certainly there's not much to be seen—some fir woods, your fields, and plenty of sand; but it is a glorious station to defend, because it is so bare all round the castle—without tree or bank. Your sentimentalists, indeed, might pronounce it an uninteresting view. But what I consider splendid is this: with the exception of the nearest barn, which is about three hundred yards off in a straight line, there is no shelter better than that of a molehill for one of the enemy's skirmishers. Far as a rifle-ball can range, we are monarchs of the plain below; only there is a thicket in the way yonder—a plantation, I believe, of Fräulein Lenore's."

"I acknowledge myself guilty," said Lenore.

"Very well," replied Fink, carelessly; "then you shall pay the cost if we are hit. Half a dozen riflemen might lurk safely there."

"It is Lenore's favorite spot," said the baron, apologetically; "she has a grass-plot there; it is the only place outside the wall where she can sit in the open air."

"Indeed!" said Fink; "that's a different thing;" and, looking round for Lenore, he saw she had disappeared. The next moment the yard gate opened, and Lenore, followed by a few laborers, hurried to the plantation.

"What are you going to do?" cried Fink from his height.

Lenore signified by a gesture that she was going to have the trees removed; and, seizing a young fir, she exerted all her strength to uproot it. The men followed her example. In a few moments the young plantation was done away with. Then Lenore herself caught up a spade, and began to level the grassy mound.

Now Anton had planted these trees with the young lady. Both had thoroughly enjoyed the improvement. Since then, Lenore had gone there daily, and each of the little trees had been to her a personal friend. When, therefore, Anton saw it all annihilated, he could not help saying somewhat coldly, "That feeble plantation would have done us little harm; surely you have caused useless devastation."

"Why," replied Fink, "the lady has acted like a prudent commandant of a fortress, the first display of whose talents always consists in leveling about the building, and a plantation can be made again any spring day. Carry off the wood to the farm-yard," cried he to the men; "tear down the wooden inclosure of the well, bring the boards to the yard, and hide the well's mouth."

When Lenore returned to her place behind her father's chair, Fink nodded to her like an elder comrade to a younger, took up his telescope, and again explored the border of the forest.

And thus the party spent another hour. No one was inclined to speak, and Fink's occasional jests fell on unfruitful ground. Anton went down to keep the people in order, but something soon impelled him to return to the battlements, and watch the forest with the rest. At last, after a longer silence than usual, Fink, throwing away his cigar, observed, "It is getting late, and we pay our guests too much honor by expecting them with such silent devotion. When the news came of their march, Wohlfart and I were both wanted in the house; and as Karl is breaking my poor horse's legs at a distance, we sent no one to reconnoitre. Now we pay for that sin of omission; we sit here prisoners, and our men are getting tired before the enemy comes. It is essential that one of us should mount and away to bring in further tidings. This stillness is unnatural: not a creature to be seen in the fields, not one on the roads. It seems odd to me, too, that for the last two hours no refugees should have arrived from the forest; and, besides, the very smoke of Neudorf has disappeared."

Anton silently turned away. "Go, my son," said Fink; "take one of the most trustworthy of our men with you; look how things are going on in our village, and beware of the pine wood. Stay a moment; I will take one other look through the telescope." He looked long, examined each tree, and at last laid down the glass. "There is nothing to be seen," said he, thoughtfully. "If the gentry we are expecting carried any thing besides scythes, we should be compelled to believe there is some witchcraft at work. But now all is uncertainty. Beware of the woods."

Anton left the tower, called the superintendent and two servants, had the baron's horse and two of the swiftest farm-horses got ready, and the gate opened by the Kunau smith. All was silent and peaceful. The fowls that Karl had bought a few weeks before were scratching away on the dunghill; the pigeons were cooing on the thatch; a little dog, belonging to the smith, had constituted himself the guardian of the forsaken buildings, and barked suspiciously at the riding party.

They trotted away through the village, and stopped at the tavern. The bar was empty. Anton called for the landlord. After a while the man came to the door, looking pale and frightened, and clasped his hands when he saw Anton. "Just

God! Mr. Wohlfart, to think of your still being in the country! I believed that you and the family had fled to Rosmin or to the heart of our troops long ago. Heavens! this is a misfortune! Bratzy has been here, and has been stirring up the people against the family in the castle, and against the Germans every where; but he could not bring them to attack the castle; so the greatest part of the villagers have gone off to the Poles at Tarow. Those that have remained behind have concealed themselves; and here I am, burying what I may want to carry off in a hurry."

"Where are the enemy now?" inquired Anton.

"I do not know," cried the landlord; "but I know that they are a great host, and that they have with them lancers in uniform."

"Do you know whether the wood is safe toward Neudorf?"

"How can it be safe? No one has come from Neudorf here for several hours. If the way were open, half the village would now be here in my inn or at the castle."

"You are right. Will you wait here for the band that is coming?" inquired Anton, ready to start. "You would be safer in the castle."

"Who knows!" cried the host. "I can not leave; if I do, my whole place will be laid waste."

"But your women?" asked Anton, holding in his horse.

"I must have people to help me," wailed the distracted man. "As they are young, they must just endure it. There is Rebecca, my sister's child: she belongs to a family that understands business. She knows how to deal with the peasants; she knows how to get money from them, even when they are dead drunk. Rebecca," cried he; "Mr. Wohlfart asks whether you will go to the castle, to be safe from these wild men."

The face of Rebecca, surrounded with red hair, now emerged from the cellar.

"What have I to do with the castle, uncle?" cried she, resolutely. "Who do you call wild men? Our peasants are the wildest men in the whole country; if I can get on with them, I shall get on with any. My aunt has quite lost her wits, and there must be some one here who knows how to deal with guests. I am much obliged to you, kind sir, but I am not afraid; the gentlemen who are with the party will not let any harm happen to me."

"Forward, my men!" cried Anton. They galloped farther

on through the village; all the doors were closed, but a woman's face was seen here and there looking through the small windows after the riders. In this way they came along the broad highway till they got near the wood.

One of the servants now said to Anton, "There is a young plantation on the left as you enter the wood, where a hundred men might lie in ambush without our seeing them, and if there, they would soon snuff us out, or cut off our way to the castle."

"You are right," said Anton. "We will ride along the field till we have got behind the plantation, where the trees stand singly, and we can venture in and out. From thence we can explore the plantation on foot." They turned accordingly off the road, and crossed the fields, keeping their horses out of the range of shot from the wood. Now Anton bade them dismount, gave the bridles into the superintendent's keeping, and cautiously advanced. "Fire into the wood," ordered Anton, "and then run back to your horses as hard as you can."

The shots rattled through the plantation, and were answered in a few moments by an irregular fire and a loud yell. The balls whistled over Anton's head, but the distance was great, and the men got back to their horses without injury. "Gallop! we know enough. They had not the wisdom to keep quiet." The little band flew along the highway, the loud cries of their pursuers sounding behind them. They arrived breathless at the castle, where they found all in alarm. Fink met them at the entrance.

"You were right," cried Anton: "they are lying in ambush no doubt these many hours, perhaps in hopes of surprising you, or both of us, indeed, on the way to Neudorf. They would then have got the castle without a struggle."

"How many of them may there be?" asked Fink.

"Indeed, we had no time to count them," replied Anton. "No doubt, only a detachment has advanced so far; the greater number are behind in the wood."

"We have roused them," replied Fink; "now we may expect their visit. It is better for our people to receive them before sunset than in the night."

"They come," cried Lenore's voice from the tower.

The two friends hurried to the platform. As Anton looked over the battlements the sun was preparing to set. The golden sky turned the green of the woods to bronze. Forth from the forest came, in orderly procession toward the village, a troop of horsemen, about half a squadron, followed by more

than a hundred men on foot, the nearest of them armed with muskets, the others carrying scythes. The lovely evening light suffused the figures on the tower. A cockchafer hummed merrily at Anton's ear, and, high in air, the lark was chanting his evening lay. Meanwhile the danger was approaching. It came nearer and nearer along the winding way, a dark, long-drawn-out mass, unheard as yet, but plainly seen.

Still the cockchafer kept on humming, and the lark soared higher in its rapturous song. At length the procession disappeared behind the first cottages in the village. These were moments of breathless silence. All looked steadfastly at the place where the enemy would emerge into sight. Lenore stood next to Anton, her left hand clutched a gun, and her right kept unconsciously moving the bullets in a sportsman's pouch. As soon as the horsemen appeared in the middle of the village, Fink caught up his cap, and said gravely, "Now, gentlemen, to our posts! You, Anton, be kind enough to lead the baron down stairs." As Anton supported the blind man down the steps, he pointed back at Lenore, who remained motionless, gazing at the advancing enemy. "And you too, dear lady," continued Fink, "I pray you to think of your own safety."

"I am safest here," replied Lenore, firmly, letting her gun drop on the flags. "You will not require me to hide my head in the sofa-cushions when you are about to risk your life."

Fink looked with intense admiration at her beautiful face, and said, "I have no objection to make. If you are resolved to take up your station on this platform, you are as safe as any where in the castle."

"I will be cautious," replied Lenore, waving him off.

"And you, my boys," said Fink, "hide behind the walls; take care not to let a shoulder or the top of your cap be seen, and do not fire before I sound an alarm with this. You will hear it plainly up here." He took out a broad whistle of foreign aspect. "Good-by till we meet again," said he, looking at Lenore with a beaming glance.

"Till we meet again," answered Lenore, raising her arm and looking after him till the door closed behind him.

Fink found the baron in the hall. The poor nobleman was reduced to a most pitiable state of mind by the excitement of the day and the sense of his own uselessness at a time when he felt action the rightful privilege of his station. In his earlier years he had ever met personal danger in the most intrep-

id manner. How much his strength was broken now plainly appeared in his unsuccessful attempts to maintain his self-control. His hands were restlessly outstretched as though seeking some weapon, and painful groans forced themselves through his lips.

"My kind host and friend," said Fink, addressing him, "as your indisposition makes it inconvenient to you to deal with these strangers, I crave permission to do so in your stead."

"You have *carte blanche*, dear Fink," replied the baron, in a hoarse voice; "in fact, the state of my eyes is not such as to allow me to hope that I can be of any use. A miserable cripple!" cried he, and covered his face with his hands.

Fink turned away with his usual shrug, opened a slide in the oaken door which had been intended to lead to the unfinished terrace, and looked out.

"Permit me," said Anton to the baron, "to lead you to a place where you may not be unnecessarily exposed to the balls."

"Do not trouble yourself about me, young man," said the baron; "I am of less consequence to-day than the poorest day-laborer who has taken up arms for my sake."

"Have you any thing more to say to me?" asked Anton of Fink, as he took up his gun.

"Nothing," replied the latter, with a smile, "except to beg that you will not forget your usual caution if you come to a hand-to-hand scuffle. Good luck to you!" He stretched out his hand. Anton grasped it, and hurried to the court.

"The enemy are passing their opinion upon your farming just now," said Fink to the baron; "we shall have the gentlemen here in a few minutes; there they come, cavalry and infantry. They stop at the barn; a party of riders advance; it is the staff. There are some handsome young fellows among them, and a couple of beautiful horses; they ride beyond the range of our fire, all round the castle. They are seeking an entrance; we shall soon hear the knocker at the back door."

All was silent. "Strange," said Fink. "It is surely the custom of war, before the assault, to summon the besieged to surrender; but there come the officers from their circuit round the castle back to their infantry. Has Wohlfart inspired them with such terror that they have fled away *ventre à terre?*"

The ring of horses' hoofs and the hollow march of the infantry were now heard.

"Zounds!" said Fink; "the whole corps marches as if on parade up to the castle front. If they mean to storm your fortress on this side, they have the most remarkable conceptions of the nature of a strong place. They draw up against us at a distance of five hundred yards. The infantry in the middle, the horsemen at both sides: quite a Roman order of battle. Julius Cæsar over again, I declare. Look! they have a drummer; the fellow advances; the row you hear is the beat of drums. Ah ha! the leader rides forward. He comes on, and halts just before our door. Politeness demands that we should inquire what he wants." Fink pushed back the heavy bolts of the door; it opened; he stepped out on the threshold covering the entrance, and carrying his double-barrel carelessly in his hand. When the horseman saw the slender figure in hunting costume standing so quietly before him, he reined in his horse and touched his hat, which Fink acknowledged by a slight bow.

"I wish to speak to the proprietor of this estate," said the horseman.

"You must put up with me," replied Fink; "I represent him."

"Tell him, then, that we have some orders of the government to carry out in his house," cried the rider.

"Would your chivalry permit me to ask what government has been frivolous enough to give you a message for the Baron Rothsattel? From what I hear, the views taken in this country about government in general are a little disturbed."

"The Polish Central Committee is your as well as my government," replied the rider.

"You are very good-natured in allowing a Central Committee to dispose of your heads; you will allow us, however, to hold a different opinion on this particular point."

"You see that we have the means to enforce obedience to the orders of government, and I advise you not by opposition to provoke us to use force."

"I thank you for this advice, and should be still more obliged if, in your zeal for your duty, you would not forget that the ground on which you stand is not public, but private property, and that strange horses are only allowed to exercise thereon by the consent of the proprietor, which, so far as I know, you have not obtained."

"We have had words enough, sir," cried the rider, impatiently; "if you are really authorized to represent the propri-

etor, I require you to open this castle to us without delay, and to deliver up your arms."

"Alas!" replied Fink, "I am under the unpleasant necessity of refusing your request. I would add a hope that you, together with the gentry in shabby boots ranged behind you there, will leave this place as soon as possible. My young folk are just going to see whether they can hit the molehills under your feet. We should be sorry if the bare toes of your companions were to be hurt. Begone, sir!" cried he, suddenly changing his careless tone to one of such vehement anger and scorn that the Pole's horse reared, and he himself laid his hand on the pistols at his holster.

During this conversation the rest of the horsemen and the infantry had drawn nearer to catch the words.

More than once a barrel had been lowered, but they had always been pushed back by a few riders in advance of the ranks. At Fink's last words, a wild-looking figure in an old frieze jacket took aim, a shot was heard, and the bullet flew past Fink's cheek, and struck the door behind him. At the same moment a suppressed scream was heard, a flash seen on the top of the tower, and the luckless marksman fell to the ground. The man who had conducted the parley turned his horse, the assailants all fell back, and Fink closed the door. As he turned round, Lenore stood on the first flight of the stairs, the recently-discharged gun in her hand, her large eyes fixed wildly upon him. "Are you wounded?" cried she, beside herself.

"Not at all, my faithful comrade," cried Fink.

Lenore threw away the gun, and sank at her father's feet, hiding her face on his knees. Her father bent over her, took her head in his hands, and the nervous agitation of the last few hours brought on a convulsive fit of sobbing. His daughter passionately clasped his trembling frame, and silently held him in her arms. There they were, a broken-down existence, and one in which the warm glow of youthful life was bursting into flame.

Fink looked out of the window; the enemy had retired beyond range of fire, and were, as it seemed, holding a consultation. Suddenly he stepped up to Lenore, and, laying his hand on her arm, said, "I thank you, dear lady, for having so promptly punished that rascal. And now I beg you to leave this room with your father. We shall do better if anxiety on your account does not withdraw our eyes from the

enemy." Lenore shrunk back at his touch, and a warm blush overspread her cheek and brow.

"We will go," she said, with downcast eyes. "Come, my father." She then led the baron up stairs to her mother's room. There she heroically strove to compose herself, sat down by the couch of the invalid, and did not go near Fink again the whole evening.

"Now, then, we are by ourselves," cried Fink to the sentinels; "short distances, and a steady aim! If they storm this stone building, they shall get nothing by it but bloody pates."

Accordingly, there he stood with his companions, and looked with keen eye at the ranks of their assailants. There was a great stir among them. Some detachments went off to the village; the horsemen rode up and down; there was evidently something afloat. At last a party brought some thick boards and a row of empty carts. The upper parts of them were lifted off, and the lower placed in a row, the poles away from the castle, the hind wheels toward it. Next, boards were nailed together, and made into pent-houses, which being fastened to the back of the carts, projected a few feet beyond them, and afforded a tolerable shelter for five or six men.

"Ask Mr. Wohlfart to come here," cried Fink to one of his riflemen.

"There has been shooting," said Anton, as he entered the hall; "is any one wounded?"

"This thick door, and one of the rabble yonder," replied Fink. "Without any order, they replied to the first shot from the tower."

"There is not an enemy to be seen in the court. A troop of horsemen came to the gate; one ventured up to the palings, and tried to look through. But when I started up behind them, they all took to flight in terror."

"Look there," said Fink; "they are amusing themselves in making small barricades. As long as this evening light allows us to see, the danger is not great. But in the night, those huts on wheels may come a little too near."

"The sky keeps clear," said Anton; "there will be a bright starlight."

"If I only knew," said Fink, "why they have had the madness to attack the strongest side of our fortress! It can only be that your peaceful visage has had the effect of the Gorgon's head upon them. Henceforth you will be described as a scarecrow in all Slavonic fights."

It was dark when the hammering away at the carts ceased. A word of command was heard. The officers summoned a few men by name to the poles, and six movable roofs rolled on rapidly to about thirty yards from the front of the castle.

"Now for it," cried Fink. "Remain here and look to the lower story." He sprang up the steps; the long row of front rooms was opened; one could see from one end of the house to the other. "Mind your heads," cried he to the sentinels. Immediately came an irregular fire against the windows of the upper story, the leaden shower rattling through the panes, the glass clattering on the floor. Fink took out his whistle; a shrill sound vibrated loudly through the house, and was responded to by the salvos of the besieged from both stories and from the tower.

And now followed an irregular fire from both sides. The besieged had the advantage—their aim was truer, and they were better concealed than those without.

During the brief pauses, Fink's voice was to be heard crying, "Steady, men; keep close." He was every where; his light step, the clear tones of his voice, his wild jests from time to time, kept up the spirits of all. They filled Lenore's soul with a thrill of rapture; she hardly felt the full terrors of her situation; nor did the convulsive starts of her father, nor her mother's low groans, lead her to despair, for the words of the man she loved sounded like a message of salvation in her ear.

For about an hour the battle raged around the walls. The great building rose dark in the pale starlight; no light, no form was to be seen from without; only the flashes that from time to time shone out from a corner of the windows announced to those outside that there was life within. He who walked through the rooms could discover a dark shape here and there behind a pillar, could see eyes glowing with excitement, and a head bent to observe the foe. True, none of the men there assembled were used to this bloody work; they had been gathered from the plow, the workshop, from every species of peaceful industry; and painful excitement, feverish suspense, protracted during the whole day, was visible in the aspect of the strongest among them.

Yet Anton remarked with a gloomy satisfaction how calm he himself was, and how brave the men in general. They were busy, they were at work, and, even in the midst of their deadly occupation, the strength and energy were evident which all active labor gives to man. After the first shots, those on

the front side loaded as composedly as though they were at their every-day toil. The face of the farm-servant hardly looked more anxious than when he walked between his oxen in the field, and the skillful tailor handled his gun with as much indifference as he would his smoothing-iron. It was only the reserve guard who were restless; not from fear, but from dissatisfaction with their own inactivity. At times a bold fellow would steal into the house, behind Anton's back, in order to have a chance of firing off his gun in front, and Anton was obliged to place the superintendent at the court-door to prevent this courageous way of desertion.

"Only once, Mr. Wohlfart; do let me have one shot at them!" urgently pleaded a young fellow from Neudorf.

"Wait," replied Anton, loading; "your turn will come; in an hour you will relieve the others here."

Meanwhile the stars rose higher, and the shots became fewer as both parties grew weary.

"Our people are the strongest," said Anton to his friend; "the men in the court are not to be kept back any longer."

"It is all little better than shooting in the dark," replied Fink; "true, they make it matter of conscience to take good aim, but it is generally a mere accident if their balls take effect. Nothing has happened to our side but a few slight wounds, and I believe those without have not suffered more."

The rolling of wheels was now heard. "Listen! they are drawing back their war-chariots." The firing ceased, and the whole line disappeared in the darkness. "Leave off," continued Fink; "and, Anton, if you have any thing to drink, give it, for these have shown themselves brave men. Then let us quietly await the renewal of the siege."

Anton accordingly had some refreshments distributed to the men, and went through the whole house, dismissing them, and examining the rooms from the cellar upward. As he drew near the women's rooms on the lower story, he heard, even at a distance, a lamentable chaos of voices. Entering, he found the bare walls dimly lighted, the floor covered with straw, on which crouched women and children. The women expressed their terror by every kind of passionate gesture, many ceaselessly imploring the help of Heaven, without any alleviation of their intense misery; others staring straight before them, stunned by the horrors of the night; in short, the pleasantest impression was that made by the children, who, having howled with all their might, had no further care. In the midst of all

this wretchedness, these little ones lay, their heads resting on a bundle of clothes, their small hands clenched, sleeping as quietly as in their beds at home, while one young woman sat in a corner rocking her sleeping infant in her arms, apparently forgetful of all besides. At last, still watching the child, she came up to Anton, and asked how her husband was faring.

Meanwhile the enemy made large fires, and part of their soldiery sat near them, and were seen to boil their coffee. There was great disturbance, too, in the village; men were heard shouting and ordering, lights were seen in all directions, and there was rapid coming and going along the streets.

"That does not look like a truce," cried Anton.

At that moment a loud knock was heard at the back door; the friends looked at each other, and rushed down to the court.

"Rothsattel and roebucks," whispered a voice, improvising a password.

"The forester!" cried Anton, pushing back the bars and letting the old man in.

"Shut the gate," said the forester; "they are close on my track. Good-evening to you all; I am come to inquire whether you can make any use of me?"

"Get into the house," cried Anton, "and tell us all."

"Every thing is as quiet in the forest as in the church," said the forester; "the cattle are lying in the quarry, and the shepherd, too, is there with his creatures. The farmer keeps watch. I crept, in the dark, into the village to reconnoitre, and now come to warn you. As they have not made much of their guns, the rascals are going to try fire. They have got together all the grease and tar in the village, they have taken all the women's shavings, and whenever they found an oil lamp, they poured it over bundles of rushes."

"They mean to burn the yard gate?" asked Fink.

The forester made a face. "Not the yard gate; they have a deadly fear of that, because you have artillery-wagons and a cannon in the yard."

"Artillery!" cried both friends, in amazement.

"Yes," nodded the forester; "through the chinks of the planks they have seen blue carts, horses, and a gun-carriage."

"Karl's new potato-carts, the plow, and the water-butt!" cried Anton.

"No doubt," replied the forester. "On my way here I peeped into the inn yard, and waited for some one that I

knew. Then Rebecca ran by me with a basket; I whistled, and called her out behind the stable. 'Are you there, old Swede?' said the wild thing. 'Take care that your head be not set on fire. I have no time to talk with you; I must attend to the gentlemen; they want coffee.' 'Why not Champagne?' said I. 'No doubt the gentlemen are very polite, you pretty creature,' said I; for one gets over women with flowery speeches. 'You are an ugly fellow yourself,' said the girl, laughing at me; 'get away with you!' 'They won't hurt you, my little Rebecca,' said I, stroking her cheeks. 'What's that to you, old sorcerer?' said the little toad; 'if I were to scream, the whole roomful would come to my aid.' 'Don't be so contradictious, my child,' said I; 'be a good girl, fill another bottle, and bring it out here. One must do something for one's friends in bad times.' Then she snatched the bottle out of my hand, telling me to wait, and ran off with her basket. After a while she returned with the bottle quite full, for she is a good creature at heart, and as she gave it me, she cried, 'If you see the young gentlemen in the castle, tell them that the folks here have a great dread of their artillery; they have been asking me whether it was true that they had cannon. I told them I was quite sure that was the name of a great thing I had often seen on the property.' Then I slunk off again, and crept along the ditch, past fellows with scythes, who are mounting guard behind our farm-yard. When I was about a hundred yards from them, I tore away, and they swore after me. That's how things stand."

"That notion of theirs about fire is uncomfortable," said Fink; "if they understand the thing, they may smoke us out like badgers."

"The threshold is stone, and this thick door is high above the ground," said the forester.

"I am not afraid of the flames, but of the smoke and glare," replied Fink; "if they light up our windows, our men will aim still worse. One good thing for us is that the gentlemen on the English saddles, who head the enemy, have never stormed any but a petticoat fortress before. We will bring all our men to the front, and leave only two or three sentinels behind; we will trust Rebecca's story."

Fresh cartridges were given out, and a fresh detachment stationed at the windows, additional men were placed in the halls of the upper and lower story, and on the platform of the tower, Anton commanding up stairs, the smith below, and the

forester remaining with a small body in reserve. All these arrangements were just made in time, for a loud hum was heard at a distance, together with shouts of command, the march of an advancing body, and the rumbling of carts.

"Keep your guns at full cock," cried Fink, "and fire only at those who press in at the door."

The wheeled pent-houses moved on as before, a Polish order was given, and a rapid fire began on the part of the enemy, exclusively directed to the important door and the windows near it. The balls thundered on the oaken planks and on the masonry, and more than one found its way through the window openings, and struck the ceiling above the heads of the garrison. Fink cried to the forester, "You shall run a risk, old man; take your people to the back door, open it, creep round close to the house, and drive away those fellows behind the three carts to the left, who have ventured too near; get close to them; you can knock them all over if you aim true; the carts have no covering; you can be back before the fellows run out from behind. Be quick and cautious; with this whistle I will give the signal for your rushing out from the shadow of the walls."

The forester collected his men and hurried to the court. Fink ran up stairs to Anton. The enemy's fire grew still more frequent. "This time it is grim earnest," said Anton. "Our people, too, are getting excited."

"Here comes the real danger," cried Fink, pointing through a loop-hole in the wall to a high shapeless mass which slowly approached. It was a harvest-wagon, loaded to an immense height and breadth, and propelled by invisible hands to the front of the castle. "A fire-ship! there are the yellow straw bundles on the top. Their plan is evident; they are steering it against the door. Now, then, we must shoot well; not one of the fellows who mount it must get back safe." He sprang up the stairs, and cried to those stationed on the tower, "Every thing now depends upon you; as soon as you see the men who are pushing the wagon onward, fire! wherever you can see a head, or even a leg, fire! Every one of them must die!" The wagon came nearer. Fink raised his own rifle twice, took aim, and twice laid it down. The wagon load was so high that it was impossible to see those who propelled it. These were moments of painful suspense on both sides: even the enemy's fire ceased; every eye was fixed on the fearful vehicle which was to bring the bitter conflict to a fatal close.

At length the backs of the hindmost men at the pole came into sight. Two flashes from Fink's rifle, two yells, the wagon stood still, those who were pushing it crowded closer. Two dark bodies lay on the ground. Fink loaded again, a wild smile playing round his lips. A raging fire upon the tower was the answer given by the foe. One of the men on the tower was shot in the breast; his gun fell down over the wall; he sank at Fink's feet. Fink merely glanced at him, and rammed his second bullet down. At that moment some figures rushed out of the darkness to the wagon. A spirited shout was heard, and the machine was once more set in motion. "Brave fellows!" muttered Fink; "they are doomed to death." Other forms were now visible at the end of the pole. Fink again took aim. Again a cry of anguish; but the wagon moved on. It was not more than thirty yards from the door; the moment was indeed critical. The shrill sound of the whistle was heard through the night; from the windows of the upper story flew the fiery salvo, and from the left side of the house rose a loud cry. The forester made a sally, a crowd of dark figures rushed against the pent-house that stood nearest to the corner of the castle; for a moment there was a scuffle, then some shots fired, and the conquered foe fled from their shelter to the open plain. For the third time the deadly double-barrel flashed from the tower, and struck the pole of the wagon, and the men who were propelling it, seized with a sudden panic, retreated from its cover into the sheltering darkness. But this did not avail them. From the tower and the windows of the upper story bullets pursued them, and more than one fell. Behind them rose a cry of rage, and a dark line rapidly advanced to receive the fugitives. A universal fire against the house began. Then the enemy retreated rapidly as they had advanced, carrying the wounded and the carts back with them. The fire-ship alone, a dark mass, still stood a few yards from the door. The firing ceased, and an uncomfortable silence succeeded to the deadly conflict.

In the hall of the upper story Anton and Fink met, and were immediately joined by the forester. Each of the friends silently sought to ascertain, in the dim light, whether the other stood before him unharmed. "Capitally done, forester," cried Fink. "Demand to be admitted to the baron, and give in your report."

"And request Fräulein Lenore to give you linen for dressings; we have had losses," said Anton, mournfully, as he

pointed to the floor, where two men sat leaning against the wall and groaning.

"Here comes a third," replied Fink, as a dark shape was slowly carried down stairs from the tower. "I fear the man is dead; he lay at my feet like a log."

"Who is it?" inquired Anton, shuddering.

"Barowsky, the tailor," whispered one of the bearers.

"What a fearful night!" cried Anton, turning away.

"We must not think of that now," said Fink. "Human life is only valuable when one is ready to surrender it on a fitting opportunity. The great point is, that we have shaken off that fiery millstone from our throats. It is not impossible that the wretches may yet succeed in kindling it; but it will not do much harm at its present distance."

At that moment a bright light shone through the loop-holes of the tower. All rushed to the window. A dazzling light flamed up from the opposite side of the wagon, and a sudden impetus hurled the heavy mass against the wall of the house. A single man sprang back from the wagon; a dozen guns were pointed at him at once.

"Stop!" cried Fink, in a piercing voice. "It is too late. Spare him; he is a fine fellow; the mischief is done."

"Merci, Monsieur; au revoir!" said a voice from below; and the man sprang uninjured into the darkness.

In a moment the wagon was in a blaze, and from the straw and rushes with which it was laden on the top, the yellow flames rose crackling, while firebrands flew in all directions. The house was suddenly illuminated: masses of smoke burst through the shattered windows.

"That is powder," cried Fink. "Steady, steady, my men! We will keep the enemy off if they force an entrance. You, Anton, see whether you can put out the fire."

"Water!" cried the men; "the window-frame has caught!" Without, there were fresh orders shouted out. The drums beat; and, with a wild cry of triumph, a cordon of skirmishers neared the house. The fire of the besiegers began once more, in order to impede the quenching of the flames. Water was brought from the great butt in the yard, and poured on the burning window-frames—a dangerous task enough; for the front of the house was lighted up, and the ever-advancing skirmishers aimed at every figure as it became visible. The besieged glanced anxiously at the flames, and returned the fire of their opponents unsteadily. Even the sentinels in the court

looked more behind than before them. The disorder became general. The moment of greatest danger had come. All seemed lost.

Next a man called down from the tower, "They are bringing short ladders from the village; we can see the axes in their hands."

"They will get over the palings, and break in the windows of the lower story," cried the men to each other, in utmost alarm.

The forester rushed to the court. Fink carried off a few men with him to the side of the house on which the men with ladders were advancing. All were in confusion. Even Fink's threatening voice no longer took effect upon them.

At that moment some men, with bars of iron in their hands, were seen hurrying in from the court-yard to the hall door. "Make way!" cried a stalwart figure; "this is blacksmith's work!" The man pushed back the bolts of the door. The opening was filled by the burning wagon. Spite of smoke and flames, the smith leaped upon its burning frame. "Help me, you hares!" screamed he, in angry tones.

"He is right," cried Anton. "Onward, my men!"

Boards and poles were brought, and the men unweariedly pressed onward through the smoke, and pushed and heaved away at the glowing mass. At length the smith succeeded in throwing down some of the sheaves. One could now get a glance of the dark sky, and the smoke was less stifling.

"Now we have it!" cried he, triumphantly; and bundle after bundle fell to the ground, and burned harmlessly away. The wagon was more and more quickly unloaded, blazing feather-beds and billets of wood falling with other things.

Anton had the door half closed as the enemy's bullets passed through the flames, and the men had to use their levers from the side. The wagon-ladders fell down, burned to charcoal; and with a shout of triumph, all the levers were applied at once, and the fragments of the wagon pushed a few yards from the door, which was quickly locked again from inside; while the men, black as imps, and with clothes burned, loudly congratulated each other.

"Such nights as these make strong friendships," cried the smith, in great delight, as he shook Anton's hand, which was little less black than his own.

Meanwhile the axes of the besiegers were hacking away at several windows of the lower story, the loosened boards creak-

ed, and Fink's voice was heard saying, "Knock them down with the butt-ends!"

Anton and the forester now betook themselves upon the window through which the besiegers sought to enter. But the worst was over there too. Fink came to meet them, the bloody axe of an insurgent in his hand, and, flinging it away, he cried to Anton and his party, "Put new boards into the windows. I hope the butchery is at an end."

A few more salvos from without, and single shots from within, and all was still in the castle and in the field. The walls still glowed a while in the firelight, but it faded and faded away. The wind rose and drove away the smoke curling round the windows from the burning fragments before the door. The pure night air filled the corridors and the halls once more, and the starlight shone quietly on the sunken eyes and pale faces of the garrison. On both sides the energies of the combatants were exhausted.

"What hour of the night is it?" asked Fink, going up to Anton, who was watching the movements of the enemy through the loop-holes of the wall.

"Past midnight," replied Anton.

They went up to the tower and looked about them. The fields around the castle were empty.

"They have laid themselves down to sleep," said Fink. "Even the fires below are out, and but few isolated voices sound from the village. Those shadows all round the house alone tell us that we are besieged. We have some hours of peace before us; and as we shall hardly get sleeping-time to-morrow, our people must avail themselves of the present. Leave only the necessary sentinels, and let the posts be relieved in two hours. If you have no objection, I shall go to bed too. Let me be called as soon as any thing is stirring outside. You will take very good care of the night-posts, that I know." So saying, Fink turned away and went to his room, where he threw himself on his bed, and in a few moments was fast asleep.

Anton hurried to the guard-room, arranged the posts with the forester, and fixed the order in which they were to be relieved.

"I shall not be sleepy," said the old man; "firstly, because of my age; next, from my habits as a huntsman. I will, if you allow, arrange the posts, and look after things in general."

Once more Anton went round the court and the stables.

Here, too, quiet was restored: only the horses restlessly stamped their hoofs on the hard ground. Anton gently opened the door of the women's rooms, in the second of which the wounded had been laid. As he entered, he saw Lenore on a stool near the straw beds, two of the stranger women at her feet. He bent down over the couch of the wounded: the colorless face and disordered hair of the unfortunate men looked ghastly on the white pillows which Lenore had snatched from her own bed.

"How fares it with you?" whispered Anton.

"We have tried to bind up the wounds," replied Lenore. "The forester says that there is hope of both."

"Then," continued Anton, "leave them in charge of the women, and avail yourself of these hours of rest."

"Do not speak to me of rest," said Lenore, rising. "We are in the chamber of death." She took him by the hand, and led him to the opposite corner, drew aside a dark cloak, and pointed to a human form beneath it. "He is dead!" said she, with a hollow voice. "As I raised him with these hands, he died. His blood is on my clothes; and it is not the only blood that has been spilled to-day. It was I," she wildly cried, convulsively pressing Anton's hand, "it was I who began this blood-shedding. How I am to bear this curse, I know not; how I am to live on after this day, I know not. If I have henceforth a place in this world, it is in this room. Leave me here, Wohlfart, and think no more about me."

She turned away and resumed her seat on the stool by the side of the straw bed. Anton drew the cloak over the dead, and silently left the room. He went next to the guard-room and took up his gun. "I am going to the tower, forester," said he.

"Each has his own way," muttered the old man. "The other is wiser—he sleeps. But it will be cold up there; this one shall not be without a wrap." He sent a man up with a villager's cloak, and ordered him to remain with the gentleman.

Anton told the man to lie down and sleep, and wrapped himself up in the warm covering. Then he sat in silence, resting his head against the wall over which Lenore had leaned as she fired, and his thoughts flew over the plain—from the gloomy present to the uncertain future. He looked beyond the circle of the enemy's sentinels, and over the darker boundary of the fir woods, which kept him prisoner here, and

bound him to circumstances which appeared to him strange and improbable, as though he read them in a book. His wearied mind contemplated his own fate as though it were that of a stranger, and he could now calmly look down into the depths of his own spirit, which the stormy alternations of the day had hitherto hid from him. He saw his former life pass in review before him: the figure of the noble lady on the balcony of her castle; the beautiful girl in her skiff, surrounded by her swans; the waxlights in the dancing-saloon; the mournful hour when the baroness had placed her jewels in his hands —each of those moments when Lenore's eyes had lovingly met his own. All those seasons now returned to his mind, and he plainly discerned the glamour that she had cast around him. All that had chained his fancy, warped his judgment, and flattered his self-love, now appeared to him an illusion.

It had been an error of his childish spirit which vanity had fostered. Alas! the brilliant mirage had long been dissipated in which the life of the aristocratic family seemed great, noble, enviable to the poor accountant's son. Another feeling had replaced it, and a purer—a tender friendship for the only one in that circle who had retained her strength when the others sank. Now, she too parted from him. He felt this was, and must be so more and more. He felt this now without pain, as natural, as inevitable. And further, he felt that he was thus free from the ties that detained him here. He raised his head, and looked over the woods into the distance. He blamed himself, first, that this loss did not grieve him more, and, next, that he was conscious of a loss. Had there, then, been a silent hope at the bottom of his heart? Had he thought to win the beauteous girl to share his future life? had he dreamed of becoming a member of the family by whom he was employed? If he had occasionally been weak enough to do this, he now condemned himself.

He had not always felt rightly; he had secretly cherished many a selfish thought when looking at Lenore. That had been wrong, and it served him right that he now stood alone among strangers, in relations that pained him because they were indefinite, and in a position from which his own resolve could not free him at present, could hardly free him for some time to come.

And yet he felt himself free. "I shall do my duty, and only think of her happiness," said he, aloud. But her happiness? He thought of Fink—thought of the character of his

friend, which always impressed, but often angered him. Would he love her in return, and would he allow himself to be bound? "Poor Lenore!" he sighed.

In this way Anton stood till the bright aspect of the northern horizon passed over to the east, and thence a pale gray spread over the sky, the chilly forerunner of the rising sun. Then Anton looked once more at the landscape round him. He could hardly count the enemy's sentinels, who surrounded the castle in pairs, and here and there a scythe shone in the brightening light. Bending down, he woke the man, who had gone to sleep on the flags stained by his comrade's blood; then he went to the guard-room, threw himself on the straw that the forester carefully shook down for him, and fell asleep just as the lark soared from the dewy ground, by its joyous call to summon forth the sun.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

After an hour the forester woke the sleeper. Anton started up and looked round, stupefied at the unfamiliar scene.

"It is almost a sin to disturb you," said the good old man; "all is quiet outside, only the enemy's cavalry have gone off to Rosmin."

"Gone off!" cried Anton; "then we are free."

"Except for the foot-folks," said the forester, "and they are still two to one of us. They hold us fast. And I have something else to say. There is no more water in the butt. Our men have drunk half of it, the rest was thrown on the fire. For my part, I can do without it, but the castle is full of men, and they will hardly get through the day without a drink."

Anton sprang up. "This is a melancholy good-morning, my old friend."

"The well is broken," continued the old man; "but how if we were to send some of the women to the brook? The sentinels would not do much to the women; perhaps they would not prevent them from getting a few bucketfuls of water."

"A few buckets would not do much for us," replied Anton.

"They would raise the spirits," said the old man; "they would have to be shared. Were Rebecca here, she would get

us the water. We must try what we can do with the others. Those confounded fellows are not bad to women, if they be but bold. If you approve, I will see what I can make of some of our girls."

The forester called down to the kitchen—"Suska!" The young Pole sprang up stairs.

"Listen to me, Suska," said the forester, anxiously; "when the baron awakes, he will call for his hot water; all the water in the castle is done; we have beer and schnapps enough, indeed, but what Christian can wash his hands in beer? so take the buckets, and get us water. Run down to the brook; you will get on very well with your countrymen. Don't stay too long chattering, or we shall get a scolding. And, I say, just ask our neighbors why they stand there still with their lances; their horsemen have gone away; we have no objection to their moving off too."

The girl willingly caught up the buckets, the forester opening the yard door for her, and down she went to the water. Anton watched her in anxious suspense. She got to the brook without any hinderance, and without troubling herself about the sentinels, who were some twenty yards off, and who looked with much curiosity at her. At length one of the men with scythes went up to her. The girl put down her buckets, crossed her arms, and both began a peaceful conversation. Then the Pole took up the buckets, filled them with water, and gave them to the girl, who slowly returned to the castle, the forester opening the gate for her, and saying, in a caressing tone, "Bravo, Susan! what did the sentinel say to you?"

"Stupid things," replied she, blushing. "He told me that I must open the door for him and his comrades when they return to the castle."

"As if that were all?" said the forester, slyly. "So they mean to return to the castle?"

"To be sure they do," said the girl. "Their horsemen are gone to meet the soldiers from Rosmin. When they return, the man said they would all run together to the castle."

"We shall hardly admit them," replied the forester. "None shall enter the gate but your sweetheart yonder. You have, I suppose, promised him admittance, if he comes alone and late?"

"No!" answered Susan, indignantly; "but I dared not be uncivil."

"Perhaps we may try it once more," suggested the forester, glancing at Anton.

"I don't think it," replied the latter. "An officer is riding round the posts, and the poor fellow will get a rough return for his gallantry. Come, and let us divide our little store. Half of this first bucket for the family—half for us men; let the other make a breakfast for the women and children."

Anton himself poured the water into the different vessels, and appointed the smith to guard it. While so doing, he said to the forester, "This is the hardest task that we have had as yet. I do not know how we are to hold out during the day."

"Many things may happen," replied the forester, consolingly.

A bright spring day now began; the sun rose cloudlessly behind the farm-yard, and soon warmed the mist that hung around the walls; the people sought out the sunny corner of the court; the men sat in little groups with their wives and children, and all seemed in good heart. Anton went in and out among them. "We must have patience till noon—perhaps till the afternoon; then our troops will come."

"If those fellows yonder do no more than at present," replied the smith, "we may be easy enough. They stand there like so many wooden posts."

"They lost their courage yesterday," said another, contemptuously.

"It was a mere straw-fire; the smith threw it down, and they have nothing to follow it up with," cried a third.

The smith folded his arms and smiled proudly, his wife looking at him with delight.

Next the upper story began to show symptoms of life. The baron rang and demanded a report. Anton went up to give it him, then entered Fink's room and woke his friend, who was still fast asleep.

"Good-morning, Tony," cried Fink, comfortably stretching himself. "I shall be down in a moment. If you can send me a little water through some of your connections, I shall be very grateful to you."

"I will get you a bottle of wine from the cellar," replied Anton; "you must wash in wine to-day."

"Ha!" cried Fink, "is it come to that? At all events, it is not Port wine, I hope."

"We have but a few bottles of either kind," continued Anton.

"You are a bird of ill omen," said Fink, looking for his boots. "You have doubtless the more beer in your cellars."

"Just enough to give the garrison one draught. A small cask of brandy is our chief treasure."

Fink whistled the Hessian march. "You will own, my son, that your tenderness for the women and children was somewhat sentimental. I already see you, in my mind's eye, with your shirt sleeves tucked up, killing the lean cow, and, with your old conscientiousness, administering mouthfuls to the famished household—you in the middle—fifty gaping mouths around you. Be sure that you prepare a dozen birch rods; in a few hours the screams of the hungry children will rise to heaven, and, in spite of your philanthropy, you will be obliged to scourge the whole troop of them. Otherwise, I think we managed pretty well yesterday. I have had a famous sleep, and so things must take their chance another day. Now let's go and have a look at the enemy."

The two friends mounted to the tower. Anton reported what he had heard. Fink carefully explored the sentries' posts and the line of road till lost in the wood. "Our situation is too quiet to be comfortable," said he, shutting up the glass.

"They mean to starve us out," said Anton, gravely.

"I give them credit for that clever notion; and they do not judge ill, for, between ourselves, I have strong doubts whether we have any relief to hope for."

"We may depend upon Karl," said Anton.

"And upon my bay too," replied Fink; "but it is very possible that my poor Blackfoot may have the misfortune to be carrying the carcass of one of the insurgents at this very moment; and whether the youth Karl may not have fallen into the hands of one of the bands who, no doubt, swarm throughout the country; whether he ever found our soldiers; whether they chose to march to our aid; whether, in short, they will have the sense to come in time; and whether they are strong enough, after all, to disperse the troop gone out to meet them—these, my boy, are all questions which may reasonably be put, and I, for one, dare not answer them hopefully."

"We might attempt a sally, but it would be bloody work," said Anton.

"Pooh!" said Fink; "it would be useless, which is worse. We might disperse one set of them, and another would be

there in an hour; nothing but having a strong party to relieve us can get us out of the scrape. As long as we keep within these walls we are strong; on the open field, encumbered with women and children, a dozen horsemen might ride us down."

"We must wait, then," said Anton, gloomily.

"Well said, after all. The whole of human wisdom consists in never putting to one's self or to others questions which nobody can answer. The affair threatens to be tedious."

The friends came down again, and hour after hour passed—weary hours of leaden inactivity. First Anton, then Fink, looked through the glass at the opening into the wood. There was little to be seen; patrols came and went; armed peasants entered the village, and were dispatched in different directions; the sentinels were regularly inspected and relieved every two hours; the besiegers were busy in searching and disarming the surrounding villages, in order to make a more vigorous assault than ever on the castle.

The Germans were pent up in their fortress like a wild beast in his lair, and the huntsmen waited with calm confidence for the time when hunger, or else fire, should complete their conquest.

Meanwhile Fink tried to employ his people; made the men clean and brighten their arms, and himself inspected them all; next, powder and lead were given out, bullets cast, and cartridges made. Anton showed the women how to clean the house and the court, as well as they could, without water. All this had the good effect of keeping the prisoners occupied for a few hours.

The sun rose higher, and the breeze wafted the peaceful chime of bells from the nearest village.

"Our breakfast will be sparing enough," said Anton to his comrades. "The potatoes are roasted in the ashes, meat and bacon are finished; the cook can not bake, for we are again without water."

"As long as we have the milch-cow in the stable," replied Fink, "we still possess a treasure which we can display to the hungry ones. Next, we have the mice in the castle, and, finally, our boots. He who has been condemned to eat beefsteaks in this country ought not to find boot-leather a tough diet."

The forester interrupted them. "A single horseman is coming from the farm-yard to the castle with a woman behind him. I lay any thing it is Rebecca."

The horseman approached the front door, waving a white handkerchief, halting near the burnt fragments of the great wagon, and looking at the windows of the upper story. It was the envoy of the preceding day.

"We will not be so unpolite as to keep the gentleman waiting," said Fink, pushing back the bolts, and appearing unarmed on the threshold. The Pole silently bowed; Fink raised his cap.

"I told you yesterday evening," began the former, "that I should have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"Ah!" replied Fink; "you, then, were the gentleman who occasioned all that smoke? It was a pity to spoil the wagon."

"You prevented your men from firing on me yesterday," continued the Pole, in German, spoken with a hard foreign accent. "I am grateful to you for it, and anxious to prove myself so. I hear that there are ladies in the castle; this girl brings them milk. We know that you are without water, and I should not wish the ladies to be inconvenienced by our conflict."

"Jackanapes!" muttered the forester.

"If you will permit me to give you a few bottles of wine in exchange for your milk," replied Fink, "I will accept your present with thanks. I presume you have no superfluity of this commodity at your command."

"Very good," said the Pole, smiling. Rebecca hurried with her pitcher to the yard gate, gave in the milk, and received the wine from the growling forester. The Pole continued: "Even if you be well supplied with wine, it can not serve instead of water. Your garrison is numerous, and we hear that you have many women and children in the house."

"I should consider it no hardship," replied Fink, "for these women and children to drink wine, as well as we men, till you do us the favor which I yesterday requested, of leaving this estate and the brook yonder altogether."

"Do not hope it, sir," said the Pole, gravely; "we shall employ all our strength to disarm you; we know now that you have no artillery, and it would be at any time in our power to force an entrance. But you have held out like brave men, and we do not wish to go further than is absolutely necessary."

"Prudent and sensible," replied Fink.

"Therefore I make you a proposal which need not offend your self-respect. You have no relief to hope for. Between

your soldiers and this village there is a strong body of our troops. A collision of the armies is expected in the course of the next few days at no great distance from here, and your generals are, therefore, unable to detach any number of men. I am telling you no news; you know this as well as I; therefore I promise to you and to all within these walls a safe-conduct, if you will give up the castle and your fire-arms. We are ready to escort you and the ladies in any direction that you may wish, as far as our occupation of the country extends."

Fink replied more seriously than he had hitherto done, "May I ask who it is whose word of honor would be pledged to me?"

"Colonel Zlotowsky," replied the horseman, with a slight bow.

"Your offer, sir," returned Fink, "demands our thanks. I have no doubt of its sincerity, and will assume that you have influence enough over your companions to carry it out. But, as I am not the master of this house, I must communicate your proposal to him."

"I will wait," replied the Pole, retreating to a distance of about thirty yards, and stopping opposite the door.

Fink closed it, and said to Anton, "Let us go to the baron at once. What should you think best?"

"To hold out," replied Anton.

They found the baron in his room, his head resting on his hands, his face distorted, a picture of distress and nervous agitation. Fink told him of the Pole's offer, and begged for his decision.

The baron replied, "I have perhaps suffered more hitherto than any of the brave men who have risked their lives in this house. It is a horrible feeling to be obliged to sit still when honor summons one to the foremost ranks. But, for this very reason, I have no right to dictate to you. He who is incapable of fighting has no right to decide when the fighting shall cease; nay, I have hardly a right to tell you my views, because I fear that they may influence your high-hearted minds; besides which, unfortunately, I do not know the men who defend me; I can not judge of their mood or of their strength. I confidently leave every thing to you, and place the fate of my nearest and dearest in your hands. May Heaven reward you for what you do for me. Yet not for me—for God's sake, not for me—the sacrifice would be too great," cried he, in utmost excitement, raising his folded hands and sightless eyes to heaven; "think of nothing but the cause that we defend."

"Since you repose so generous a trust in us," said Fink, with chivalrous bearing, "we are resolved to hold your castle so long as we have the very least hope of relief. Meanwhile there are serious contingencies to be anticipated; our men may refuse to fight longer, or the enemy may force an entrance."

"My wife and daughter beg, as I do also, that you will not consider them at a time like this. Go, gentlemen," cried the baron, with outstretched arms; "the honor of an old soldier is in your hands."

Both bowed low before the blind man, and left the room. "After all, there is honor in the man," said Fink, nodding as he went along. Then he opened the door and the officer rode up.

"The Baron Rothsattel thanks you for your proposal; but he is resolved to defend his house, and the property of those who have trusted to him, to the very utmost. We can not accept your offer."

"Take, then, the consequences," cried the officer, "and the responsibility of all that must ensue."

"I will take the responsibility," said Fink; "but I have still one request to make from you. Besides the wives and children of the country people, there are two ladies in the castle, the wife and daughter of the Baron Rothsattel; if an accident should enable you to occupy this house, I recommend these defenseless ones to the protection of your honor."

"I am a Pole!" cried the officer, proudly rising in his stirrups. Then taking off his hat, he galloped back to the farmyard.

"He looks a bold fellow," said Fink, turning to the men who had gathered round him from the guard-room; "but, my friends, when one has the choice of trusting to an enemy's promises or to this little iron barrel, I always think it best to rely upon what we have in our hand."

He shook his rifle as he spoke.

"The Pole promises safe-conduct," continued Fink, "because he knows that in a couple of hours his band will be dispersed by our soldiers. We should be a good bite for him with our thirty guns. And then, if our cavalry came, and instead of us, who sent for them, found the house full of that rabble yonder, they would send a rattling curse after us, and we should be disgraced forever."

"I wonder whether he meant fair?" inquired one of the men, doubtingly.

Fink took him confidentially by the lappet of his coat. "I do believe, my boy, that he meant fair; but I ask you how far one could calculate upon the discipline of those men? We should not get much beyond the wood yonder before another party would overtake us, and the women and our property would be maltreated before our eyes; and so I calculate we shall do the best to show them our teeth."

Warm approbation followed this speech, and a few hurrahs were raised for the young gentlemen in the castle.

"We thank you," said Fink; "and now all of you to your posts, my men, for it may chance that you will get a few cracks on your heads again. That will keep them quiet for an hour or two," said he, turning to Anton. "I don't expect an attack by day, but it is better for them to stand at their posts than to be putting their heads together. It was unlucky that they should have heard the negotiations."

But even the severe discipline which Fink maintained did not avail to ward off the depression which fell upon the little garrison as the day wore on. The Pole's proposal had been heard by many; even the women had in their curiosity opened their door and pushed into the hall. Quietly, gradually, fear began to take possession of the men's hearts, and, contagious as a disease, it spread from one to the other. It broke out, too, in the women's apartments. Suddenly some of them felt a great desire for water, complaining of thirst, first timidly, then louder, pressing against the door of the kitchen, and beginning to sob aloud. Not long after, all the children took to screaming for water, and many who, under other circumstances, would not have thought about drinking at all, now felt themselves unspeakably wretched.

Anton had the last bottle of wine brought out of the cellar, cut the last loaf and soaked it in the wine, giving a piece to each, assuring them that it was the best remedy against thirst, and that if one held it in the mouth, he would be quite unable to drink water, even if paid for it. This expedient answered for a time, but terror found other avenues by which to enter. Many began to consider whether they would have lost any thing in giving up an old gun, and gaining thereby their liberty, and the right to go where they would. This view of things was loudly combated by the forester, who placed himself in the midst of the guard-room, and resolutely replied: "I tell you, Gottlieb Fitzner, and you, you stout Bökel, that the giving away our guns would be a mere trifle to any of us; the only

thing is, that any one of you to whom this vile thought could occur would be a low, mean, cowardly scoundrel, who would make me sick whenever I saw him." To which proposition Fitzner and Bökel eagerly acceded, and Bökel declared that, for his part, he could stand such a fellow just as little as the forester himself; so that danger was averted. But the unemployed sentinels were engaged in anxious conversation. The castle forces were contrasted with those of the enemy, and finally the slight nature of the palings in the yard became the leading object of a searching criticism. It was clear that the next attack would be directed against them, and the most stout-hearted admitted that they could offer little resistance. Even the faithful smith shook them with his strong hand, and by no means admired the manner in which they were nailed together.

In the middle of the day these attacks of timidity were not actually dangerous, for the greatest portion of the men were waiting ready armed for the enemy's approach. But as the sun began to decline without any attack, and without the sentinels on the top of the tower announcing any prospect of relief, inactivity and exhaustion combined to increase the universal distress. Their dinner had been unsatisfying: potatoes burnt to a cinder, and a little salt; no wonder that they should again begin to be thirsty, and that the women should return and complain to Anton that his expedient had only availed for a very short time. Among the men, too, fear, hunger, and thirst spread fast from one story to another. Anton had served out a double ration of brandy, but that did not avail. Several of the men became, not rebellious, but weaker and more depressed. Fink looked with contemptuous smile at these symptoms of a condition of which his elastic spirit and iron nerves had no experience; but Anton, to whom all came with petitions and laments, felt the whole distress of these hours. Something must be done to help efficiently, or all was lost. Accordingly, he went into the court-yard, determined to sacrifice the cow. He walked up to her, stroked her neck: "Lizzie, my poor beast, you must go," said he. As he led her out, his eye fell upon the empty water-butt, and a happy thought flashed across him. The yard was only raised a few feet above the brook. The whole district was full of springs; it was probable that, if dug for here, water might be found, and it would be an easy thing for the garrison to dig a well. If the earth excavated were pushed up against the palings, their strength

would be considerably increased, and, what was the chief thing, the work would set all idle hands going, and might last for hours, nay, days. He knew, indeed, from former attempts, that the water immediately about the castle was muddy, and in ordinary times undrinkable, but that did not signify to-day. Anton looked up at the sun; there was not a minute to be lost. He called the superintendent into the court, and the latter joyfully agreeing to the proposal—all the unoccupied hands about the castle, and the women and children too—the laborers' implements were produced, and in a few minutes ten men with spades and rakes were occupied in digging a large hole in the middle of the court, while the women and children heaped the thrown-up earth against the palings. Some men, and such of the women as were to be had, were summoned by Anton to the slaughter of the poor cow, who was once more exhibited before she fell a victim to the exigencies of the day. Soon all were in full employment. The well-mouth, which was far wider than would have been required for an ordinary shaft, deepened visibly, and a wall rose inside the palings, which seemed the work of friendly underground gnomes. The people worked as they had never in their life done before; the men's spades emulated each other; little bare legs sprang actively over the ground; wooden shoes and slippers left deep traces in the mound of earth. Each wanted to work; there were more hands than space in which to move them. All sadness and anxiety were over and gone. Jests were bandied about. Even Fink came to look on, and said to Anton, "You are a missionary, and you know how to promote the spiritual good of your people."

"They work!" replied Anton, with greater cheerfulness than he had felt for the last four-and-twenty hours.

The well had now become so deep that it became necessary to have a ladder to descend by; the ground got damper and damper, till the men worked in a perfect swamp. The mud had to be taken out in buckets; but the people were more eager than ever, and the buckets flew from hand to hand, while all laughed like little children at the mud-sprinkling their impatience got. The mud wall rose rapidly above the palings, and wood and stones were thrown in to consolidate it. Anton could hardly get the little doorway kept open. Meanwhile there was restless agitation among the enemy. Horsemen rode rapidly along the line of sentries, and watched the progress of the new fortification: from time to time, one would

venture nearer than the rest, then withdraw as soon as the forester raised his gun above the wall. Thus hour after hour passed; the sun sank down, and the red light of evening suffused the sky. But those in the court-yard took no heed of it, for at the bottom of the well the men were standing up to their waists in water. It was a yellow, dirty liquid enough; but the people stared down the hole as though streams of gold were flowing there. At last, when the twilight shadows lay dark on its mouth, Anton ordered the diggers to leave the well. A coarse sheet was brought, and laid over the water-butt, and the water strained through it.

"My horses first," cried one of the servants, snatching a bucketful for the thirsting animals.

"When it has settled a little, it will be as good as river-water," exclaimed the smith, in delight.

As for the diggers, they were never tired of tasting, and each triumphantly corroborated the worthy man's assertion. Meanwhile, Anton had fresh palings driven into the mud rampart, and the strong planks of the potato-carts securely fastened to them. At nightfall all was finished. The women kept straining water into the butt. Great joints of meat were taken to the kitchen, where a brisk fire was crackling away, and the cheerful hopes of an excellent supper rose in the hearts of the besieged.

Then the drums of the enemy were again heard, and the shrill call of Fink's whistle vibrated through the castle. For a moment the men in the court-yard stood still; they had, during the last few hours, thought little about the foe; then all rushed into the guard-room and caught up their arms. The lower story was doubly occupied. The forester hurried off with a strong detachment to the court-yard, and clambered up the new wall.

"The crisis approaches," whispered Fink to Anton; "in the course of the last few hours strong parties have come into the village, and just now a troop of horsemen has joined them. We shall not be able to hold out for a second night. They will attack on both sides at once, and with the help of short ladders they will soon make their way into the castle. And that they know, for you may see that every band that leaves the village is armed with axes and ladders. Let us meet our inevitable doom with spirit; the praise is yours if we are beaten like men and not like cowards. I have been with the baron; he and the ladies are prepared; they will all remain to-

gether in his room. If you have a few words to spare when one of the Messieurs of the party walks in over you, remind him of the ladies. God willing, Anton, I'll take the court-yard side—you the front."

"It seems to me impossible," cried Anton, "that we should be beaten. I have never had so good a hope as in this very hour."

"Hope of relief!" said Fink, shrugging his shoulders, and pointing through the window at the enemy. "If it comes in an hour's time it comes too late. Since Rebecca's cannon exploded, we are in the hands of the foe as soon as they choose to storm in earnest. And they will choose. One must not indulge in illusions that glow no longer than a cigar. Give me your hand, my dear fellow, and farewell."

He pressed Anton's hand, and a proud smile beamed again over his face. So stood the friends, each looking affectionately at the face of the other, uncertain whether he should ever behold it again. "Farewell!" cried Fink, taking up his rifle as their hands parted; but all at once he seemed rooted to the ground, and intently listened, for above the drums of the foe and the tramp of their approach a clear sound rang through the night air, a merry pealing *fanfare*, and in reply to it there came from the village the regular beat of a drum of the line, then a loud discharge of artillery, and a distant hurrah.

"They come!" was the cry on all sides; "our soldiers come!"

The forester rushed into the hall. "The red-caps!" he screamed out. "They are riding up along the brook to the bridge, and the infantry are storming the village from behind."

"Now our side!" cried Fink; "prepare for a sally!"

The bolts were shot back; the whole garrison was out in a moment; and Anton could hardly get the superintendent and a few of the servants to return and take care of the house. The forester rapidly marshaled the men into order while Fink looked at the position of the combatants. The columns of infantry advanced through the village. The ceaseless discharges showed how inveterate the fight was; but the soldiery slowly approached, the enemy yielded, a few fugitives had already run out of the farm-yard. Meanwhile a detachment of hussars crossed the brook opposite the castle, driving small parties of the besiegers before them. Fink led his men round the house, and stationed them at the corner that lay nearest to the vil-

lage. "Patience!" cried he; "and when I lead you on, don't forget your password, or you will be ridden and trodden down in the dark like the others."

It was with the greatest difficulty that the men were kept in rank, such was their impatience.

A single horseman now came riding toward them. "Hurrah! Rothsattel!" cried he, while still at a distance.

"Sturm!" called out a dozen voices; and Anton sprang forward to greet his ally.

"We have them," said Karl. "They had occupied the Rosmin high road, but I led our men by by-paths through the woods."

A dark mass was visible at the end of the village, with riders in advance. The enemy halted and assembled in the farmyard.

"Now for it!" cried Fink.

The garrison marched at a quick pace over the meadow, placed themselves sideways near the first barn, and a salvo from five-and-twenty guns burst upon the flank of the enemy, who fell into confusion and fled across the plain. Again the trumpet sounded, behind them the hussars came galloping up, and cut down those that still kept their ground. Karl joined them, and vanished in the fray. The enemy were thus driven into the fields.

The Polish cavalry now sprang forward from the village, at their head the spokesman of the morning, who with loud shouts urged his men against the hussars.

"Rothsattel!" cried a youthful voice close to Anton, and, heading a detachment of hussars, a tall, slight officer rushed against the Poles. Fink raised his rifle and aimed at the Polish colonel.

"Thanks!" cried he, reeling on his horse, firing his pistol with his last breath at the breast of the hussar who was riding him down. The hussar fell from his horse, and the Pole's charger galloped away with his master's lifeless body.

In a few minutes more the vicinity of the castle was cleared of all foes. Night concealed the fugitives, and the trees of the forest spread their sheltering branches over the sons of the soil. In small detachments, the conquerors followed the last remnant of the enemy's troops.

Before the castle, Anton knelt on the ground and supported the head of the prostrate horseman on his arm. With tears in his eyes, he looked from the dying man up to his friend,

who stood on one side with a group of sympathizing officers. Their triumph was rendered a mute one, the peasants surrounding the spot in solemn silence. The motionless form was slowly carried on their crossed hands to the castle.

The baron stood on the hall steps with his daughter, ready to greet the welcome guests. As soon as Lenore saw the wounded officer, she rushed down among the bearers, by whom the body was silently laid at the baron's feet, and sank to the ground with a scream.

"Who is it?" groaned the blind man, groping in the air. No one answered him; all drew back in terror.

"Father!" murmured the wounded youth, and a stream of blood gushed from his mouth.

"My son! my son!" cried the baron, in agony, and his knees sank under him.

The youth had left his garrison to join the troops which were to be stationed near his parents. He had succeeded in exchanging into another regiment, and in accompanying the squadron sent to his father's assistance. He wished to give his father a happy surprise, and, with the raising of the siege, he brought them his bleeding breast into their house, and death into their hearts.

A mournful silence lay upon the high Slavonic castle. The storm had raged itself to rest; the white blossoms floated silently down from the great fruit-trees in the fields, and lay pure and spotless on the ground like a white shroud. Where are ye, airy schemes of the blind man, which he has so striven, suffered, and sinned to realize? Listen, poor father; hold your breath and listen. All is still in the castle, still in the forest, and yet you can not hear the one sound of which you ever thought amid your parchments and your plans—the heart-throb of your only son, the first heir of the house of Rothsattel!

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Days of sorrow now passed over the castle, hard to endure by every one who dwelt within its walls. Disease lurked in the family like canker in a flower. Since the dark hour when the dying son had been carried into his father's presence, the baron had never left his room. His small measure of remaining strength had been broken; grief consumed mind and

body. He would sit silently brooding throughout the livelong day, and neither the entreaties of Lenore nor the companionship of his wife availed to rouse him. When the fatal tidings were first communicated to the baroness, Anton had feared that the fragile thread that bound her to the earth would burst, and for weeks Lenore never left her side; but, to the astonishment of all, she rallied, her husband's state so claiming her care that her own sorrows and weakness seemed to pass away. She appeared stronger than before, and solely occupied with tending her husband: she was able to sit up for hours beside his chair. It is true that the doctor used to shake his head privately, and to tell Anton that this sudden improvement was not be trusted. As for Lenore, for the first few weeks after her brother's death she was invisible to all; and now, whenever she emerged from the sick-room, it was to answer inquiries for the invalids, or to send, through Anton, messages to the doctor.

Meanwhile, beyond the walls, a stormy spring had passed, succeeded by an unsettled summer. True, the property had no longer to dread the horrors of civil war, but the burdens that the times imposed fell heavy on the establishment. Daily the blast of trumpet and beat of drum was heard—castle and village alike had their complement of soldiers to support, and these were frequently exchanged. Anton had enough to do to provide for man and horse. The slender resources of the estate were soon exhausted, and, but for Fink's laborers, they never could have got on. Then there were all manner of interruptions to the work of the farm. More than one acre had been trodden down at the time of the siege. The men had become bewildered by passing events, and had lost their relish for regular employment. But, on the whole, order was maintained, and the plans laid down early in the spring were being carried out. The irrigation of the meadow-land prospered still better; the number of gray jackets went on increasing; and this body-guard of Herr von Fink were acknowledged throughout the district as a stout set, with whom it was well to be on good terms. Fink himself was often away. Having made and renewed the acquaintance of several officers, he threw himself heart and soul into military matters, and shared as a volunteer in the encounter in which the insurgents had been defeated. His defense of the castle had made him a marked man: he was equally hated and admired by the two conflicting parties.

Weeks had passed away since the relief of the castle, when Lenore appeared at the house door, before which Anton and the forester were holding a consultation. She looked across the court-yard, where a pump now stood, and over the palings, from which the earth had been cleared away, to the landscape, now bright with the fresh green of early summer. At last she said with a sigh, "Summer is come, Wohlfart, and we have not noticed it!"

Anton looked anxiously at her pale face. "It is delightful now in the woods," said he. "I was at the forester's yesterday, and since the rain the trees and flowers are in full beauty. If you would but agree to go out!"

Lenore shook her head. "What do *I* signify?" said she, bitterly.

"At least hear the news which the forester has just brought," continued Anton. "The man you shot was the wretched Bratzky. You did not kill him. If you have reproached yourself on that score, I can set your mind at rest."

"God be praised!" cried Lenore, folding her hands.

"That night when the forester came to us, he thought he had seen the rascal sitting in the bar with his arm tied up. Yesterday he was taken prisoner to Rosmin."

"Ay!" said the forester; "a bullet does a fellow like him no harm; he aims higher than that;" and he laid his own hand on his throat with a significant gesture.

"This has weighed on me day and night," whispered Lenore to Anton; "I have looked on myself as one under a curse. I have had the most fearful dreams and visions of the man as he fell, hands clenched, and the blood gushing from his shoulder. Oh, Wohlfart, what have we gone through!" And she leaned against the door, and fixed her tearless eyes on the ground.

A horse's hoof rung on the pavement. Fink's bay was led out.

"Where is he going?" hurriedly asked Lenore.

"I do not know," replied Anton; "he has been a great deal out of late; I see nothing of him the whole day long."

"What is he doing here with us?" said Lenore; "this unhappy house is no place for him."

"If he would only be careful," said the forester. "The Tarow people are mad at him; they have sworn to send a bullet after him, and he always rides alone, and late at night."

"It is in vain to warn him," added Anton. "Do be ra-

tional for once, Fritz," cried he, as his friend came out; "do not go riding alone, or, at least, not through the Tarow estate."

Fink shrugged his shoulders. "Ah! so our Fräulein is here! It is so long since we have had the pleasure of seeing you, that our time has hung rather heavy on our hands."

"Listen to the advice of your friends," replied Lenore, anxiously, "and beware of dangerous men."

"Why?" returned Fink; "there is no straightforward danger to apprehend; and in times like these, there is no guarding against every stupid devil who may lurk behind a tree; that would be taking too much trouble."

"If not for your own sake, think of the anxiety of your friends," implored Lenore.

"Have I still friends?" asked Fink, laughing; "I often fancy they have become faithless. My friends belong to the class who perfectly understand the duty of composure. Our worthy Wohlfart, perchance, will put an extra handkerchief in his pocket, and wear his most solemn mien if the game goes against me; and another companion in arms will console herself still more readily. Out with my horse!" cried he, swinging himself on the saddle, and with a slight bow galloping away.

"There he goes, straight to Tarow," said the forester, striking his head as he watched Fink disappear.

Lenore returned in silence to her parents' room.

But late at night, long after the castle lights were all put out, a curtain was drawn back, and a woman listened anxiously for the sound of horses' hoofs. Hour after hour passed away, and it was morning before the window closed as a rider halted at the door, and, whistling a tune, himself took his horse to the stable. After a night of watching, Lenore hid her aching head in her pillows.

Thus months passed away. At length the baron, leaning upon his daughter's arm and on a staff, ventured out into the open air, to sit silently in the shadow cast by the castle walls, or to listen for every trifle which might afford possible scope for fault-finding. At these times his dependents in general would go a good deal out of their way to avoid him, and as Anton never did this, he was not unfrequently their scapegoat. Every day the baron had to hear, in return for his cross-questioning, "Mr. Wohlfart ordered this," or "Mr. Wohlfart forbade that." He eagerly found out what orders were given by Anton, that he might countermand, and all the

bitterness and disappointment accumulated in the spirit of the unfortunate nobleman were concentrated in an impotent hatred to his agent.

Fink, for his part, took little heed of the baron, merely contracting his brows when he observed his quarrelsomeness toward Anton, and never saying more than "he can not help it."

Karl was the one who got on best with the baron, never calling him any thing but captain, and making an audible military salute whenever he had any thing to say, and this pleased the blind man. Indeed, the first token of sympathy for others which the baron evinced was elicited by the bailiff. A garden chair had been warped by the sun, and seemed on the point of coming to pieces. Karl, as he passed by, took it up, and with his clenched fist hammered it together. "You are not striking with your right hand, I hope, my good Sturm?" inquired the baron.

"Just as it happens, captain," replied Karl.

"You should not do so," remonstrated the invalid. "An injury like yours should make you careful; very often the pain returns after long years; you can not be sure that this may not be your case in after-life."

"A short life and a merry one, captain," replied Karl; "I do not look forward."

"That is a very useful fellow," said the baron to his daughter.

The corn ripened, the green fields turned to gold, the cheerful sounds of harvest began. When the first loaded wagon rolled into the farm-yard, Anton stood by the barn and watched the sheaves put in. He was joined by Lenore, who inquired, "What of the harvest?"

"As far as we could contrive to sow this year, the returns have not been bad. At least, Karl seems pleased with the crop, which exceeds our calculations," cheerfully returned Anton.

"Then you have one pleasure, Wohlfart," said Lenore.

"It is a pleasure for all on the farm; look at the steady activity of the men. Even the idle work well to day. But what pleases me most is your question; you have been so estranged from the farm, and all that concerns the property."

"Not from you, my friend," said Lenore, looking down.

"You must be ill!" eagerly continued Anton. "If I dared, I could scold you for having thought so little about your own

health all this time; your pony is become quite stiff. Karl has often been obliged to use it, that it might not lose the use of its limbs."

"It may go like the rest," cried Lenore; "I shall never mount it again. Have pity upon me, Wohlfart! I often feel as if I should lose my senses; every thing in the world has become indifferent to me."

"Why so savage, Fräulein?" said a mocking voice behind her. Lenore started and turned round. Fink, who had been absent more than a week, had joined them. "See that you send off Blasius," said he to Anton, without taking any further notice of Lenore. "The rascal has been drunk again; he flogs the horses till the poor beasts are covered with wales. I have a great mind to give them the satisfaction of seeing him punished before their eyes."

"Have patience till after the harvest," replied Anton; "we can not spare him now."

"Is he not a good-natured man in other respects?" timidly suggested Lenore.

"Good-nature is a convenient name for every thing that is morbid," replied Fink. "We call it good-nature in men and sensibility in women." He looked at Lenore. "How has the poor pony sinned, that you will never ride him more?"

Lenore blushed as she replied, "I find that riding gives me headache."

"Indeed!" said Fink, tauntingly; "you once had the advantage of being less delicate. I do not think this lachrymose mood is suitable for you; you will not lose your headache thus."

Lenore, quite subdued, turned to Anton: "Have the newspapers arrived? I came to ask for them for my father."

"The footman has taken them to the baroness's room."

Lenore turned away with a slight inclination, and went back to the castle.

Fink looked after her and said to Anton, "Black does not become her; she is much faded. Hers is one of those faces which only please when they are full and blooming."

Anton cast a dark glance at his friend. "Your behavior toward her has been so strange for the last few weeks, that I have often felt indignant at it. I do not know what your purpose may be, but you treat her with a *nonchalance* which does not offend her alone."

"But you too, Master Wohlfart, eh?" asked Fink, looking

Anton full in the face. "I was not aware that you were this lady's duenna too."

"This tone will not avail you," replied Anton, more quietly. "I do right to remind you that you are behaving worse than ungently toward a noble creature who has now a double claim upon the tender consideration of us all."

"Be good enough to pay her that consideration yourself, and don't trouble yourself about me and my manner," returned Fink, dryly.

"Fritz," cried Anton, "I do not understand you. It is true, you are inconsiderate."

"Have you found me so?" interpolated Fink.

"No," replied Anton. "Whatever you have been to others, to me you have always shown yourself generous and sympathizing; but for this very reason it pains me inexpressibly that you should have thus changed toward Lenore."

"Leave that to me," returned Fink; "every one has his own way of taming birds. Let me just add, that if your Fräulein Lenore be not soon shaken out of this sickly way of life, she will be utterly ruined. The pony alone will not do it, I know; but you, my son, and your melancholy sympathy, won't do it either; and so we will just let things take their course. I am going to Rosmin to-day; have you any commands?"

This conversation, although it led to no estrangement between the friends, was never forgotten by Anton, who silently resented Fink's dictatorial tone, and anxiously watched his bearing toward Lenore, whom Fink never sought nor avoided, but simply treated as a stranger.

Anton himself had some unpleasant experiences to go through. Much as he avoided communicating what was unwelcome to the baron, there was one thing he could no longer spare him, and that was the settlement of his son's debts. Soon after Eugene's death, numberless letters, with bills inclosed, had arrived at the castle, been given by Lenore to Anton, and then by him all made over, Sturm's note of hand included, to Councilor Horn, whose opinion and advice he craved to have respecting them. This opinion had now arrived. The lawyer did not disguise that the note of hand given by young Rothsattel to the porter was so informal that it amounted to nothing more than a mere receipt, and did not in any way bind the baron to pay the debt. Indeed, the sum was so great that immediate payment was out of the question. Then

Anton himself had lent the young prodigal more than eight hundred dollars. As he drew out Eugene's note of hand from among his papers, he looked long at the handwriting of the dead. That was the sum by which his imprudence had purchased a share in the fate of this noble family. And what had this purchase brought him? He had then thought it a fine thing to help his aristocratic friend out of his embarrassments; now, he saw that he had only abetted his downward course. He gloomily locked up his own note of hand in his desk again, and with a heavy heart prepared for a conversation with the baron.

At the first mention of his son, the baron fell into a state of painful excitement; and when Anton, in the flow of his narrative, chanced to call the departed by his Christian name, the father's pent-up anger found a vent. He interrupted Anton by sharply saying, "I forbid you to use that familiar appellation in speaking of my son. Living or dead, he is still Herr von Rothsattel as far as you are concerned." Anton replied with great self-command, "Herr Eugene von Rothsattel had contracted debts to the amount of about four thousand dollars."

"That is impossible!" broke in the baron.

"The accredited copies of notes of hand and bills of exchange which Councilor Horn has procured, place the matter beyond doubt. With regard to the largest debt, one of nineteen hundred dollars, the certainty is the more complete, as the lender, the father of the bailiff Sturm, happens to be a man of peculiar uprightness. A letter to me from the departed expressly acknowledges this obligation."

"Then you knew of this debt," cried the baron, with increasing anger, "and you have kept it back from me! Is this your much-vaunted fidelity?"

It was in vain that Anton sought to explain the circumstances of the case. The baron had lost all self-control. "I have long ago found out," said he, "how self-willed your whole line of conduct is. You take advantage of my situation to get the disposition of all my means; you make debts, you allow debts to be made, you draw money, you charge it to my account, just as you see fit."

"Say no more, baron," cried Anton. "It is only compassion for your helplessness which at this moment prevents me from answering you as you deserve. How great that compassion is, you may infer from the fact that I will endeavor to

forget your words, and still ask you for your decision: will you or will you not acknowledge your late son's debts, and give legal security to the porter Sturm, or to his son, your bailiff?"

"I will do nothing," cried the baron, beside himself, "that you require of me in so peremptory and pretentious a tone."

"Then it is useless to speak to you any longer. I implore you, baron, to reconsider the affair before you pronounce your final decision. I shall have the honor of receiving your ultimatum this evening, and I hope that ere then your sense of honor will have triumphed over a mood to which I should not wish a second time to expose myself."

With these words he left, and heard the poor baron upsetting chairs and tables in his wrath. Scarcely had he reached his room when the confidential servant appeared, and asked for the deeds and account-books, which had hitherto been kept in Anton's room. Silently the latter made them over to the affrighted domestic.

He was dismissed, then—rudely and summarily dismissed; his uprightness questioned: this breach was final. It was a bitter hour. Even now, while indignantly pacing up and down, he felt that this insult offered him was a punishment. True, his aim had been pure, and his actions blameless; but the enthusiastic feelings which had led him hither had not availed to establish proper relations between him and the baron—those of employer and employed. It was not the free-will, the rational choice of both, that had brought them together, but the pressure of mysterious circumstances and his own youthful romance. And thus he had claims beyond what his situation gave him, and by these the baron was oppressed and cumbered.

These reflections were interrupted by Lenore's sudden entrance. "My mother wishes to speak to you," she cried. "What will you do, Wohlfart?"

"I must go," said Anton, gravely. "To leave you thus, with your future so uncertain, is what I never could have believed possible. There was but one thing which could have induced me to part from you before I had made over the property into stronger hands. And this one thing is come to pass."

"Go!" cried Lenore, in utmost excitement. "All is crumbling around us; there is no help to be looked for; even you can not save us; go, and free your life from that of our sinking family."

When Anton joined the baroness, he found her lying on the sofa. "Sit down beside me, Mr. Wohlfart," whispered she. "The hour is come in which I must impart what, to spare myself, I have reserved for the hour when we speak most openly to each other—the last hour spent together. The baron's illness has so affected him that he no longer appreciates your faithful help—nay, your presence aggravates his unhappy state. He has so hurt your feelings that reconciliation is become impossible. Even could you forget, we should consider the sacrifice you would be making far too great."

"I purpose leaving the property on an early day," replied Anton.

"I can not," continued the baroness, "atone for my husband's offenses toward you, but I wish to give you an opportunity of revenging yourself in a manner worthy of you. The baron has attacked your honor; the revenge that I, his wife, offer you, is to assist him to retrieve his own."

Hitherto the baroness had spoken fluently, as was her wont in society; now she stopped, and seemed to lack words.

"Years ago," she said, "he pledged his word of honor, and —and broke it in a moment of desperation. The proof of this is probably in the hands of some low man, who will use this knowledge to ruin him. That I should communicate this to you at a time like this will show you the light in which I regard your connection with our house. If it be possible to restore his peace of mind, you, I know, will do it." She drew a letter from under the pillow, and placed it in Anton's hand.

Anton took it to the window, and saw with surprise that it was in Ehrenthal's handwriting. He had to read it twice before he could master its contents. In a lucid interval the imbecile had happened to recall his former dealings with the nobleman, and wrote to remind him of the stolen notes of hand, to demand his money, and to threaten the baron. The letter was full, besides, of laments over his own weakness, and the wickedness of others; and what its confusion left unexplained was cleared up by the copy of a note of hand—probably from the draught of one agreed upon by the baron and Ehrenthal, for the letter mentioned the existence of the original, and threatened to use it against the baron.

Folding up the letter, Anton said, "The threats which Ehrenthal connects with the copy inclosed need not disturb you, baroness, for the note of hand seems to have no signature, and the sum which it represents is a small one."

"And do you believe that it is a true statement?" asked the baroness.

"I do," was the reply. "This letter explains to me much that hitherto I never could understand."

"I know that it is true," whispered the baroness, in so low a voice that Anton scarcely heard it, while a faint blush overspread her face. "And you, Mr. Wohlfart, will you endeavor to get back the stolen papers for us?"

"I will," replied Anton, earnestly. "But my hopes are small. The baron has no existing claim upon these missing documents. They belong to Ehrenthal, and an understanding with him is necessary in the first instance. It will be difficult to bring about. And again, I very imperfectly understand the circumstances, and must request you to try and inform me of all you can connected with the robbery."

"I will endeavor to write to you," said the baroness. "You can draw up a list of the questions you wish answered, and I will do so as well as I can. Whatever may be the result of your efforts, I now thank you with all my soul. Our house will never pay the debt it owes you. If the blessing of a dying woman can shed a brightness over your future, take it with you on your way."

Anton rose.

"We shall not meet again," said the invalid; "this is our final leave-taking. Farewell, Wohlfart! this is the last time I shall see you on earth." She held out her hand. He bent over it, and, deeply moved, quitted the room.

Yes, she deserved to be called a noble lady. Her nature was noble, her insight into the character of others clear, and her mode of recompensing Anton's zeal dignified—very dignified. In her eyes, at least, he had always worn a powdered wig and silver knee-buckles.

In the evening Fink's step was heard in the corridor, and, entering Anton's room, he cried, "Halloo, Anton, what's up now? John slinks about as if he had broken the great china vase; and when old Barbette saw me, she began to wring her hands."

"I must leave this house, my friend," returned Anton, gloomily. "I have had a painful scene with the baron to-day." He then proceeded to relate it, and concluded by saying, "The position of this family was never so desperate as now. They need the command of twenty thousand dollars to avert new misfortunes."

Fink threw himself into a chair. "First of all," said he, "I hope you availed yourself as little as possible of this fine opportunity of being angry. We won't waste words over the scene; the baron is not accountable; and between ourselves, I am not surprised. I have seen all summer that you could not retain your romantic connection with this family. On the other hand, it is plain that you are indispensable as father-confessor to the ladies, and confidential man of business to all the people around. And I need not tell you that your sudden departure cuts up many a plan of mine. But now for the question, What will you do?"

"I shall return as soon as possible to our own capital," replied Anton. "There I shall be engaged for some time in the interest of the Rothsattels. My official relations to them cease from this very day, and as soon as the baron's family estate is sold, I shall consider my moral obligations to them canceled."

"Good!" said Fink; "that's all right. If you ever set pen to paper again on their behalf, it can only be from a sense of compassion. Another point is that Rothsattel has brought a curse upon himself by his folly, for without you things can't go on as they do for another month. Now, then, Master Anton, comes the question, What will be done here?"

"I have thought of that the whole day," returned Anton, "and I do not know. There is only one possible plan, and that is, that you should undertake that part of my office which Karl can not fill."

"Thank you," said Fink, "both for your good opinion and your friendly offer. You have been, excuse me, a good-natured fool. I am not of that stamp. In a week's time I should be under the unpleasant necessity of maltreating the baron. Have you no other plan to propose?"

"None," cried Anton. "If you do not with all your heart and soul undertake the management of the property, all that we have effected during the last year will be undone, and our German colony will go to ruin."

"It will," said Fink.

"And you, Fritz," continued Anton, "have, through your intimacy with me, become involved in its fate, and are thus in danger of losing too."

"Spoken like a book!" said Fink. "You run off and leave me here tied and bound. I'll tell you what—wait for me here; I will first of all speak a few words to Lenore."

"What are you going to do?" cried Anton, holding him fast.

"Not to make love," replied Fink, laughing. "You may rely upon that, my boy!" He rang the bell, and requested an interview with Fräulein Lenore in the drawing-room.

When Lenore entered with eyes red from weeping, and only maintaining her composure by a strong effort, he politely advanced and led her to the sofa.

"I abstain from commenting upon what has passed to-day," began he. "We will assume that my friend's presence in the capital will be more desirable for your family interests than his stay here. From all I hear, this is really the case. Wohlfart leaves the day after to-morrow."

Lenore hid her face in her hands.

Fink coldly continued: "Meanwhile, my own interests require that I should attend to them. I have spent several months here, and acquired a share in this estate. For this reason, I request you to be the bearer of a message from me to your father: I am prepared to purchase this estate from the baron."

Lenore started and rose up, wringing her hands, and exclaiming, "For the second time!"

"Be kind enough quietly to hear me," continued Fink. "I by no means intend to play toward the baron the part of angel of deliverance. I have less of the angelic nature about me than our patient Anton, and feel in no way inclined to make any offer to your father that will not advance my own interest. Let us look upon each other as opponents, and my proposal, as it really is, prompted by self-love. My offer, then, is as follows: The price of this estate, if reckoned at a sum that would secure the baron from loss, would amount to more than a hundred and sixty thousand dollars. I offer him the outside of what I consider its present worth—that is, I will accept all its liabilities, and pay the baron twenty thousand dollars in the course of twenty-four hours. Till next Easter, I should wish to leave the castle in your hands, and to remain here as your guest, if this could be arranged without inconvenience. In point of fact, I should generally be absent, and in no way burdensome to you."

Lenore looked wistfully in his face, which was at this moment hard as that of a genuine Yankee; the remnant of her composure gave way, and she burst into tears.

Fink quietly leaned back in his chair, and, without heeding

her, continued: "You see I offer you a loss, probably that of half of your inheritance. The baron has been so precipitate in investing his capital in this property that his family must needs suffer, for the market-price of it, in its present state, would assuredly not exceed my offer. I should be acting dishonorably if I disguised from you that, properly cultivated, it would probably be worth twice as much in a few years' time, but not, I am firmly convinced, under the baron's management. Had Anton remained, it might have been possible, but that hope is over. I will not conceal from you either that Wohlfart has even proposed to me to occupy his situation."

Lenore, in the midst of her sobs, here made a deprecating gesture.

"I am glad," continued Fink, "that we are of the same mind on that subject. I considered the proposal quite out of place, and rejected it at once." He then stopped, and looked searchingly at the girl before him, whose heart was torn by his words. He spoke harshly to her, he for whose smile, whose kindly glance she would have done any thing. He mentioned her father with ill-concealed contempt; his language was that of a hard egotist; and yet his offer seemed a blessing in her helpless condition, and with the second-sight of a loving heart she divined a meaning in it that she did not fully understand, but which shone into her abyss of sorrow like a distant ray of hope. However he might phrase it, this offer proceeded from no ordinary motives; and her convulsive sobs giving way to quiet tears, she tried to rise from the sofa, but sank to the floor near his chair, the very picture of sorrowful submission. "You do not deceive me," murmured she; "do with us what you will."

A proud smile passed over Fink's face as he bent over her, wound his arm round her head, pressed a kiss on her hair, and said, "My comrade, I will that you should be free." Lenore's head fell on his breast; she wept, softly supported by his arm; at last taking her hand, he pressed it tenderly. "Henceforth let us understand each other. You shall be free, Lenore, both as regards me and all others. You are losing one who has shown you the self-sacrificing tenderness of a brother, and I am glad that he is leaving you. I do not yet ask you whether you will share my fate as my wife, for you are not now free to answer as your heart dictates. Your pride shall not say me nay, and your 'yes' shall not lessen your self-respect. When the curse that lies on your house is done away with,

and you are free to remain with or leave me, your decision shall be made. Till then, an honorable friendship, comrade mine!"

And now Fink went on in another voice: "Let us think of nothing but our property; dry up those tears, which I am not fond of seeing in your blue eyes, and impart the business half of my proposal to your father and mother. If not before, I request an answer by this time to-morrow."

Lenore went to the door, then returned, and silently offered him her hand.

Slowly Fink returned to his friend's room. "Do you remember, Anton," asked he, "what you told me of your patriotism the day of my arrival here?"

"We have often spoken on the subject since then."

"It made an impression on me," continued Fink. "This property shall not fall again under a Bratzky's sceptre. I shall buy it if the baron consents."

Anton started. "And Lenore?"

"She will share her parents' fate; we have just settled that." He then told his friend the offer he had made.

"Now I hope that all will end well," cried Anton. "We shall see."

"What a purgatory for the sinner up stairs! I am glad I don't hear his groans!" said Fink.

The following morning the servant brought each of the friends a letter from the baron's room; the one of apology and thanks to Anton, the other of acceptance to Fink. These they read, and then silently exchanged.

"So the matter is settled," cried Fink, at length. "I have run half over the world, and every where found something to object to; and now I bury myself in this sand-hole, where I must kindle a nightly fire to scare the Polish wolf. As for you, Anton, raise your head and look before you, for if I have found a home, you are going to where the best part of your heart is; and so, my boy, let's go over your instructions once more. Your first commission is to find certain stolen papers. Think, too, of the second. Do what you can to secure to the family the little they have saved in this quarter, and see that their old estate, when sold by auction, is bid up to a price that will cover all mortgages. You must go, I see, and I do not ask you to remain at present, but you know that, under all circumstances, my home is yours. And now, one thing more. I should be sorry to lose the bailiff; employ your eloquence

to induce your trusty Sancho to remain here, at least over the winter."

"No one knows as yet that I am leaving," replied Anton; "he must be the first to hear it. I am going to him."

The dirty dwelling which Mr. Bratzky once occupied had changed, under Karl's management, to a comfortable abode, which had only one drawback, that of being too full of useful things, and smelling strongly of glue. Often and often Anton had sat in it to rest and refresh himself by Karl's cheery ways, and as he glanced at each familiar object, his heart sank at the prospect of leaving his faithful, unexacting ally. Leaning against the joiner's table in the window, he said, "Put your accounts by, Karl, and let us have a serious word or two."

"Now for it," cried Karl; "something has been brewing for a long while, and I see by your face that the crisis is come."

"I am going away, my friend."

Karl let his pen fall, and silently stared at the grave face opposite him.

"Fink undertakes the management of the property, which he has just bought."

"Hurrah!" cried Karl; "if Herr von Fink be the man, why, all's right! I give you joy, with all my heart," said he, shaking Anton's hand, "that things have turned out thus. In the spring I had other foolish notions. But it's all regular and right now, and our farming is safe too."

"I hope so," said Anton, smiling.

"But you?" continued Karl, his face growing suddenly grave.

"I go back to our capital, where I have some business to do for the baron, and then I shall look out for a stool in an office."

"And here we have worked together for a year," said Karl, sadly; "you have had all the pains, and another will have the profits."

"I go back to my proper place. But it is of your future, not mine, dear Karl, that I am now come to speak."

"Of course, I go back with you," cried Karl.

"I come to implore you not to do so. Could we set up together, we would never part; but I am not in a position for this. I must seek another situation. Part of the little I possessed is gone; I leave no richer than I came; so we should have to separate when we got home."

Karl looked down and meditated. "Mr. Anton," said he, "I hardly dare to speak of what I do not understand. You have often told me that my old governor is an owl who sits on money-bags. How would it do," stammered he, in embarrassment, working away at the chair with one of his tools, "that if what is in the iron chest be not too little for you, you should take it; and if any thing can be made of it—it is very presumptuous of me—perhaps I might be useful to you as a partner. It is only an idea, and you must not be offended."

Anton, much moved, replied: "Look you, Karl, your offer is just like your generous self, but I should do wrong to accept it. The money is your father's; and even if he gave his consent, as I believe he would, such a plan would involve great risk. At all events, his substance would be better invested in your own calling than in one you might enter into out of love for me; so it is better for you, my friend, that we part."

Karl snatched his pocket-handkerchief, and blew his nose violently before he asked, "And you won't make use of the money? You would be sure to give us good interest?"

"Impossible," replied Anton.

"Then I'll go back to my father, and hide my head in some hayloft about home," cried Karl, in high dudgeon.

"That you must not do," said Anton. "You have become better acquainted with the property than any other; it were a sin to throw that knowledge away. Fink wants a man like you; the farm can not possibly spare you till next summer. When we came here, it was not to benefit ourselves, but to improve the land. My work is over; you are in the midst of yours, and you will sin against yourself and your task if you forsake it now."

Karl hung his head.

"One thing that used to distress me was the meagre salary that the estate could afford you; that will be changed now."

"Don't let us speak of that," said Karl, proudly.

"We ought to speak of it," returned Anton, "for a man does wrong when he devotes the best gifts he has to an occupation that does not adequately repay him. 'Tis an unnatural life; and good results can scarcely be expected, take my word for that. I therefore beg you to remain, at least till next summer, when, owing to the extended scale of farming operations, an experienced inspector may occupy your post."

"Then," said Karl, "may I go?"

"Fink would always like to keep you; but should you leave him, remember, Karl, our frequent conversations during the past year. You have become accustomed to a life among strangers, and have all a colonist's claims to a new soil. If higher duties do not urge you home, your place is to remain here as one of us. If you leave this estate, buy land from the Poles. You, with the plowshare in your hand, will be still a German soldier, for the boundary of our tongue and our customs is gaining upon our enemies." So saying, he pointed to the east.

Karl reached out his hand, and said, "I remain."

When Anton left the bailiff he found Lenore at the door. "I am waiting for you," cried she; "come with me, Wohlfart; while you remain here, you belong to me."

"If your words were less friendly," replied Anton, "I might fancy that you were secretly glad to get rid of me, for I have not seen you so cheerful for a long time. Head erect, rosy cheeks; even the black dress has vanished."

"This is the dress I wore when we drove together in the sledge, and you admired it then. I am vain," cried she, with a mournful smile. "I wish that the impression you carry away with you of me should be a pleasant one. Anton, friend of my youth, what a mystery it is that, on the very first day free from care that I have known for years, we must part. The estate is sold, and I breathe again. What a life it has been of late years! always anxious, oppressed, humbled by friend and foe; always in debt, either for money or services: it was fearful. Not as far as you were concerned, Wohlfart. You are my childhood's friend; and if you were in trouble of any kind, it would be happiness to me if you would call me, and say, 'Now I want you; now come to me, wild Lenore.' I will be wild no longer. I will think of all you have said to me." Thus she ran on in her excitement, her eyes beaming. She hung on his arm, which she had never done before, and drew him in and out of every building in the farm-yard. "Come, Wohlfart, let us take a last walk through the farm which was once ours. We bought this cow with the white star together," cried she; "you asked for my opinion of her, and that pleased me much."

Anton nodded. "We neither of us were very sure about it, and Karl had to decide."

"What do you mean? You paid for her, and I gave her her first hay, consequently she belongs to us both. Just look

at this lovely black calf. Mr. Sturm threatens to paint its ears red, that it may look a perfect little demon." She knelt down beside it, stroked and hugged it, then suddenly starting up, she cried, "I don't know why I should make so much of it; it is mine no longer; it belongs to somebody else." Yet there was mirth in her tone of pretended regret. "Come to the pony now," she said; "my poor little fellow! He has grown old since the day when I rode after you through our garden."

Anton caressed the favorite, who turned his head now to him, now to Lenore.

"Do you know how it happened that I met you on the pony?" said Lenore to Anton over its back. "It was no accident. I had seen you sitting under the shrubs. I can tell you so to-day; and I had thought, 'Heavens! what a handsome youth! I will have a good look at him.' And that's how it happened as it did."

"Yes," said Anton; "then came the strawberries, then the lake. I stood there and swallowed the strawberries, and was rather inclined to tears; but through it all my heart was full of delight in you, who rose before me so fair and majestic. I see you still in fluttering muslin garments, with short sleeves, a golden bracelet on your white arm."

"Where is the bracelet gone?" asked Lenore, gravely, leaning her head on the pony's mane. "You sold it, you naughty Wohlfart!" The tears stood in her eyes, and she stretched out both hands to him over the pony's back. "Anton, we could not remain children. My heart's friend, farewell! Adieu, girlish dreams! adieu, bright spring-time! I must now learn to go through the world without my guardian. I will not disgrace you," she continued, more calmly. "I will always be steady, and a good housekeeper. And I will be economical. I will keep the book with three long lines down its sides once more, and put every thing down. We shall need to be saving even in trifles, Wohlfart. Alas! poor mother!" And she wrung her hands, and looked sad again.

"Come out into the country," suggested Anton; "if you like it, let us go into the woods."

"Not to the woods, not to the forester's," said Lenore, solemnly, "but to the new farm; I will go with you."

They walked across the fields. "You must lead me to-day," said Lenore. "I will not give you up."

"Lenore, you will make our parting very painful to me."

"Will it be painful to you?" cried Lenore, much pleased. Then immediately afterward, shaking her head, "No, Wohlfart, not so; you have often longed in secret to be far away from me."

Anton looked at her with surprise.

"I know," cried she, confidentially pressing his arm, "I know it very well. Even when you were with me your heart was not always with me too. Often it was, that day in the sledge, for instance; but oftener you were thinking of others, when you got certain letters, that you always read in the greatest hurry. What was the gentleman's name?" asked she.

"Baumann," innocently replied Anton.

"Caught!" cried Lenore, again pressing his arm. "Do you know that that made me very unhappy for a long time? I was a foolish child. We are grown wise, Wohlfart; we are free people now, and therefore we can go about arm in arm. Oh, you dear friend!"

Arrived at the farm, Lenore said to the farmer's wife, "He is leaving us. He has told me that his first pleasure here was the nosegay that you gathered for him. I have no flowers myself; they don't flourish with me. The only garden on the estate is here, behind your house."

The good woman tied up a small nosegay, gave it to Anton with a courtesy, and sadly said, "It is just the same as a year ago."

"But he is going," cried Lenore, and, turning away, her tears began to flow.

Anton now shook hands heartily with the farmer and the shepherd: "Think kindly of me, worthy friends."

"We have always had kindness from you," cried the farmer's wife.

"And fodder for man and beast," said the shepherd, taking off his hat; "and, above all, consideration and order."

"Your future is secured," said Anton; "you will have a master who has more in his power than I had." Finally, Anton kissed the farmer's curly-headed boy, and gave him a keepsake. The boy clung to his coat, and would not let him go.

On their return, Anton said, "What makes our parting easier to me is the future fate of the property. And I have a prevision that all that still seems uncertain in your life will be happily settled ere long."

Lenore walked in silence by his side; at length she asked,

"May I speak to you of the present owner of this estate? I should like to know how you became his friend."

"By not putting up with a wrong he did me. Our intimacy has remained unshaken, because, while I willingly gave way to him in trifles, I always abode by my own convictions in graver matters. He has a high respect for strength and independence, and might easily become tyrannical if he encountered weakness of judgment and will."

"How can a woman be firm and self-reliant with such a one as he?" said Lenore, cast down.

"No doubt," replied Anton, thoughtfully, "this must be much more difficult for a woman who passionately loves him. Every thing that looks like temper or self-will he will rudely break down, and will not spare the conquered; but if opposed by a worthy and modest nature, he will respect it. And if I were ever called upon to give his future wife a counsel, it would be this, that she should carefully guard against whatever might pass for bold or free in woman. The very thing that might make a stranger agreeable, because easily establishing a familiar footing between them, is just what he would least esteem in her."

Lenore clung closer to Anton as he spoke, and bent her head. They returned in silence to the castle.

In the afternoon Anton went once more over the estate with Karl for companion. Hitherto he had always felt that he was living in a strange land; now, when about to leave it, this seemed a home. Wherever he looked, he saw objects that had for a whole year engaged his attention. He had bought the wheat with which this field was sown; he had ordered the plow with which that servant was plowing; here he had roofed-in a barn; there he had improved a ruinous bridge. Like all who enter upon a new field of labor, he had had numberless plans, hopes, projects; and now that he was suddenly called upon to relinquish these, he first discovered how dear they had been. He next spent an hour in the forester's house. As they parted, the latter said, "When you first laid hand on this door, I little thought that the trees around us would stand so safe, and that I should ever live again among my fellow-men. You have made dying difficult to an old man, Mr. Wohlfart."

The parting hour came. Anton took a short and formal leave of the baron; Lenore was quite absorbed in sorrow, and Fink affectionate as a brother. As Anton stood by him, and

looked with emotion at Lenore, he said, "Be at ease, my friend; here, at least, I will try to be what you were." One last hand-clasp, one last farewell, then Anton jumped into the carriage. Karl seized the reins. They drove past the barn into the village road; the castle disappeared. At the end of the wood Karl halted. A troop of men were there assembled —the forester, the farmer, the shepherd, the Kunau smith, with a few of his neighbors, and the son of the Neudorf bailiff.

Anton joyfully sprang down and greeted them once more.

"My father sends me to bid you farewell," said the bailiff's son. "His wounds are healing, but he can not leave his room." And the Kunau smith shouted out as a last farewell, "Greet our countrymen at home for me, and say that they must never forget us!"

Silently, as on the day of his arrival, Anton sat by the side of his faithful Karl. He was free—free from the spell that had lured him hither—free from many a prejudice; but while as free, he was as poor as a bird of the air. He had now to begin life over again. Whether the past year had made him stronger or weaker remained to be proved. On the whole, however, he did not regret what he had done. He had had gains as well as losses; he had helped to found a new German colony; he had opened out the path to a happy future for those he loved; he felt himself more mature, more experienced, more settled; and so he looked beyond the heads of the horses which were carrying him homeward, and said to himself, "Onward! I am free, and my way is now clear."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

It is evening. Sabine stands in her treasure-chamber before the open cupboards, arranging the newly-washed table-linen, and again tying rose-colored tickets on the different sets. Of course, she knew nothing and guessed nothing. Her white damask shines to-day like silver; the cut-glass cover, which she lifts from the old family goblet, rings cheerily as a bell, and the vibrations thrill through the woodwork of the great presses. All the painted heads on the china cups look singularly cheerful to-day. Doctor Martin Luther and the sorcerer Faust positively laugh. Even Goethe smiles, and it is impossible to say how amused old Fritz appears. Yet Sabine, the

sagacious mistress of the house, knows not what these know. Or does she guess it? Hark! she sings. A merry tune has not passed her lips for long; but to-day her heart is light, and as she looks at the shining display of glass and damask, something of their brightness seems to fall upon her, and, low as the notes of the wood-bird, a song of her childhood sounds through the little room. And from the cupboard she suddenly moves to the window, where her mother's picture hangs over the arm-chair, and she looks cheerfully at the picture, and sings before her mother's face the self-same song that once, from that very arm-chair, that mother sang to the little Sabine.

At that moment a cloaked figure is gliding across the ground floor. Balbus, who is superintending the great scales, stands in the arched room, casts a half glance at the figure, and thinks to himself, with surprise, "That is rather like Anton." The porters are closing a chest, and the eldest, turning round accidentally, sees a shadow thrown by a lantern on the wall, and, leaving off hammering for a moment, says, "I could almost have fancied that was Mr. Wohlfart." And in the yard a vehement barking and leaping is heard, and Pluto runs in frantically to the servants, wags his tail, barks, licks their hands, and, in his own way, tells the whole story. But even the servants know nothing, and one of them says, "It must have been a ghost; I have lost sight of it."

Then the door of Sabine's room opens. "Is it you, Franz?" said she, interrupting her song. No one answered. She turned round, her eyes fixed wistfully upon the figure at the door. Then her hand trembled and clasped the back of the chair, while he hurried toward her, and in passionate emotion, not knowing what he was doing, knelt down near the chair into which she had sunk, and laid his head on her hand. That was Anton. Not a word was spoken. Sabine gazed on the kneeling form as at some beatific vision, and gently laid her other hand on his shoulder.

She does not ask why he is come, nor whether he is free from the glamour that led him away. As he kneels before her, and she looks into his eyes, that tenderly and anxiously seek hers, she understands that he is returning to the firm, to her brother, to her.

"How long you have been away!" said she, reproachfully, but with a blissful smile upon her face.

"Ever have I been here!" said Anton, passionately. "Even in the hour when I left these walls I knew that I was giving

up all of joy—all of happiness that I could hope to know; and now I am irresistibly impelled to come and tell you how it is with me. I worshiped you as a holy image while living near you. The thought of you has been my safety when far away. It has protected me in solitude, in an irregular life, in great temptation. Your form has ever risen protectingly between me and that of another. Often have I seen your eyes fixed upon me as of yore—often have you raised your hand to warn me of the danger I was in. If I have not lost myself, Sabine, I owe it to you."

And again he bent over her hand. Sabine held him fast and whispered, "My friend! my dear friend! we must both feel that we have dreamed and struggled—that we have resolved and overcome. What must you not have suffered, my friend!"

"No," cried Anton, "it was not the same suffering nor the same strength. I saw and reverenced you at the time when you were silently conquering yourself. I was a weak, willful man. I do not know what would have become of me had not your memory lived in my soul. When far away, the influence you exerted over me went on increasing, and only because I thought of you became I free."

"And how do you know that it may not have been the same in my case?" asked Sabine, looking lovingly at him.

"Sabine!" cried Anton, beside himself.

"Yes, that is your own noble face," cried she. "Alas! in your features, too, I can read the traces of an iron time." She rose. "We have heard of your heroic deeds, though you sent us nothing during the whole long year but a short message."

"Could I venture to do more?" broke in Anton, eagerly.

Sabine nodded archly. "We have, however, watched for tidings that reached us through your friends. Oh! when I, in the midst of these safe walls, thought of my friend exposed to every assault of the enemy! Wohlfart! Wohlfart! I rejoice that I see you again."

"Another has the property now, and the care of the defenseless family," replied Anton.

"It is the ordering of Providence," cried Sabine; and looked with delight on the newly-returned one.

In the uniform tenor of her domestic life, she had for many years had a cordial liking for Anton. Since he had left her, she had found out that she loved him, and had hidden the feeling in her heart. No trace of her love nor her renunciation

had appeared in the regular household. Hardly had she by a look betrayed the struggle going on within. Now, in the rapture of meeting, her feelings broke out. She looked at Anton in beaming delight, thinking of nothing but the joy of having him with her again, and not remarking the traces of a different feeling in Anton's pale features. He has found her indeed, but only to lose her again forever.

Still does Sabine hold his hand, and now she leads him through the corridor to her brother's study.

What are you doing, Sabine? This house is a good house, certainly, but not one in which people feel poetically, are easily moved, open their arms at once, and press new-comers to their heart. It is a straightforward, prosaic house, where requests are made and refused in few words; and it is a proud and rigid house besides. Remember this, it is no tender welcome to which you are leading your friend.

This Sabine felt, and delayed a moment before she opened the door; but her resolve was taken, and, holding Anton's hand in hers, she drew him in, crying to her brother with a beaming face, "Here he is; he is returned to us."

The merchant rose from his writing-table, but he remained standing by it; and his first words, coldly and peremptorily spoken, were these: "Release my sister's hand, Mr. Wohlfart."

Sabine drew back. Anton stood alone in the middle of the room, and looked at the principal. His strongly-marked features were aged during the last year, his hair had grown gray, the lines in his face had deepened.

"That I should enter here at the risk of being unwelcome," said Anton, "will show you how strong my desire was to see you and the firm once more. If I have excited your displeasure, do not let me feel it in this hour."

The merchant turned to his sister. "Leave us, Sabine; I wish to speak to Mr. Wohlfart alone." Sabine went up to her brother, and stood erect before him. She said not a word, but with a bright glance, in which a firm resolve was plainly visible, she looked full into his frowning face, and then left the room. The merchant looked gloomily after her, and turned to Anton. "What brings you back to us, Wohlfart?" said he. "Have you failed to attain what your youthful ambition hoped for, and are you come to seek in the tradesman's house the happiness that once seemed inadequate to your claims? I hear that your friend Fink has settled himself on the baron's

property; has he sent you back to us because you were in his way there?"

Anton's brow grew clouded. "I do not appear before you as an adventurer," said he; "you are unjust in expressing such a suspicion; nor does it become me to submit to it. There was a time when your judgment of me was more friendly; I thought of that time when I sought you out; I think of it now, that I may forgive your injurious words."

"You once said to me," continued the merchant, "that you felt yourself at home in my house and firm. And you had a home, Wohlfart, in our hearts and in the business. In a moment of effervescence you gave us up, and we, with sorrow, did the same with you. Why do you return? You can not be a stranger to us, for we have been attached to you, and, personally, I am deeply indebted to you. You can no more be our friend, for you have yourself forcibly rent the ties that bound us. You reminded me, just when I least expected it, that a mere business contract alone bound you to my counting-house. What are you seeking now? Do you want a place in my office, or do you, as appears, want much more?"

"I want nothing," cried Anton, in the utmost excitement —"nothing but a reconciliation with you. I want neither a place in your office, nor any thing else. When I left the baron, I felt that my first step must be to your house, my next to seek employment elsewhere. Whatever I may have lost during the past year, I have not lost my self-respect; and had you met me as kindly as I felt toward you, I should have told you in the course of our first hour together what you now demand. I am aware that here I can not stay. I used to feel this when far away, as often as I thought of this house. Since I have entered its walls and seen your sister again, I know that I can not remain here without acting dishonorably."

The merchant went to the window, and silently looked out into the night. When he turned round again the hard expression had left his face, and he looked searchingly at Anton. "That was well spoken, Wohlfart," said he at length, "and I hope sincerely meant. I will be equally open toward you in saying that I still regret that you have left us. I knew you as an older man seldom knows a younger; I could thoroughly trust you. Now, dear Wohlfart, you are become a stranger to me; forgive me what I am about to say. An unregulated imagination allured you into circumstances which could not but be morally unhealthy. You have been the con-

fidant of a bankrupt and a debtor, who may have retained many amiable characteristics, but who must have lost, in his dealings with unprincipled men, what we here in this firm call honor. I gladly assume that your uprightness refused to do any thing contrary to your sense of right; but, Wohlfart, I repeat to you what I have said before: any permanent dealings with the weak and wicked bring the best man into danger. Gradually and imperceptibly his standard becomes lowered, and necessity compels him to agree to measures that elsewhere he would have peremptorily rejected. I am convinced that you are still what the world calls an upright man of business, but I do not know whether you have preserved that proudly pure integrity, which, alas! many in the mercantile world treat as mere pedantry, and to have to tell you this makes your return painful to me."

Anton, white as the handkerchief he held, with trembling lips replied, "Enough, Mr. Schröter. That you should, in the first hour of meeting, say to me the most bitter thing one could possibly say to an enemy, convinces me that I did wrong to re-enter this house. Yes, you are right. I never, during my year of absence, lost the sense of the danger you speak of. I ever felt it the greatest misfortune to be unable to esteem the man by whom I was employed. But I dare make answer to you, with pride equal to your own, that the purity of the man who carefully shrinks from temptation is worth little; and that, if I have gained any thing from a year of bitterness, it is the consciousness of having been tried, and knowing that I no longer act as a boy, from instinct and habit, but from principle, as a man should. I have gained a confidence in myself that I had not before; and because I know how to respect my own character, I tell you that I perfectly understand your doubt; but that, since you have given it utterance, I look upon all ties between us as by yourself dissolved, and leave you, never to return. Farewell, Mr. Schröter!"

Anton turned to go, but the merchant hurried after him, and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"Not so fast, Wohlfart," said he, gently; "the man who saved me from the stroke of the Polish sword must not leave my house in anger."

"Do not recall the past," replied Anton; "it is useless. It is you, not I, who have mixed up injury and indignation with our meeting; you, not I, who have annihilated the power of old recollections."

"Not so, Wohlfart," said the merchant. "If by my words I have offended you more than I intended, make allowance for my gray hairs, and for a heart full of painful anxiety the past year through, and full of anxiety, too, on your account. We do not meet as we parted; and whenever friends have a mutual misgiving, let them openly express it, that they may stand and start clear. Had I valued you less, I should have kept back my thoughts, and my greeting would have been more polite. Now, however, I bid you welcome." And he held out his hand.

Anton took it, and repeated the word "Farewell."

The merchant held his hand firmly, and said, with a smile, "Not so fast; I can not let you go just yet. Remember that it is your oldest acquaintance who now entreats you to remain."

"I will remain, then, this evening, Mr. Schröter," said Anton, coldly.

The merchant led him to the sofa, and began to communicate the present state of the firm. It was no cheerful picture that he drew, but it proved his entire confidence, and helped to allay the sting of his harsh reception.

Gradually Anton became absorbed in the business details, eagerly went over calculations, and unconsciously began to speak of the business as though he still belonged to it. Once more the merchant held out his hand with a melancholy smile. Anton now grasped it cordially, and the reconciliation was complete.

"And now, dear Wohlfart," said Mr. Schröter, "let us speak of yourself. You once confided to me some particulars connected with your exertions in the baron's cause, and I impatiently cut you short; I now entreat you to tell me all you can."

Anton accordingly proceeded to mention all matters that admitted of being publicly talked of, and the merchant listened with the utmost attention.

"And now," said he, rising from his seat, "allow me to touch upon your future. After what you have said, I will not ask you to spend the next few years with me, welcome as your help would prove just now, but I beg that you will leave it to me to look out for a fitting post for you. We will not be in too great a hurry about it. Meanwhile, spend the few next weeks with us. Your room is empty, and just as you left it. I find, from what you tell me, that you have occupa-

tion cut out for you for some months to come. If, in addition to this, you are inclined to help me in the counting-house, your help will be very welcome. As for your relations with my family," he gravely continued, "I fully trust you. It is a positive necessity to me to prove this, and hence my present proposal."

Anton looked down in silence.

"I am not imposing on you any painful ordeal," said the merchant; "you know the habits of our household, and how little opportunity there is of much conversation. For Sabine, as well as for yourself, I wish a few weeks of your olden way of life, and when the time comes, a calm parting. I wish this on my sister's account, Wohlfart," added he, candidly.

"Then," said Anton, "I remain."

Meanwhile Sabine was restlessly pacing up and down the drawing-room, and trying to catch a sound from her brother's study. Sometimes, indeed, a sad thought would intrude, but it did not find a resting-place to-day. Again the fire crackled and the pendulum swung; but the fir-logs burned right merrily, throwing out small *feux de joie* through the stove door, and the clock kept constantly ticking to her ear, "He is come! he is there!"

The door opened and the cousin came bustling in. "What do I hear?" cried she. "Is it possible? Franz will have it that Wohlfart is with your brother."

"He is," said Sabine, with averted face.

"What new mystery is this?" continued the cousin, in a tone of discontent. "Why does not Traugott bring him here? and why is not his room got ready? How can you stand there so quietly, Sabine? I declare I don't understand you."

"I am waiting," whispered Sabine, pressing her wrists firmly, for her hands trembled.

At that moment footsteps were heard nearing the room; the merchant cried out at the door, "Here is our guest." And while Anton and the cousin were exchanging friendly greetings, he went on to say, "Mr. Wohlfart will spend a few weeks with us, till he has found such a situation as I should wish for him." The cousin heard this announcement with intense surprise, and Sabine shifted the cups and saucers to conceal her emotion; but neither made any remark, and the lively conversation carried on at the tea-table served to disguise the agitation which all shared. Each had many questions to hear and answer, for it had been a year rich in events. It is true

that a certain constraint was visible in Anton's manner while speaking of his foreign life, of Fink and the German colony on the Polish estate, and that Sabine listened with drooping head. But the merchant got more and more animated; and when Anton rose to retire, the face of the former wore its good-humored smile of old, and heartily shaking his guest's hand, he said in jest, "Sleep well, and be sure to notice your first dream; they say it is sure to come to pass."

And when Anton was gone, the merchant drew his sister into the unlighted ante-room, kissed her brow, and whispered in her ear, "He has remained uncorrupted, I hope so now with all my soul;" and when they both returned to the lamp-light, his eyes were moist, and he began to rally the cousin upon her secret partiality for Wohlfart, till the good lady clasped her hands and exclaimed, "The man is fairly demented to-day!"

Weary and exhausted, Anton threw himself upon his bed. The future appeared to him joyless, and he dreaded the inner conflict of the next few weeks; and yet he soon sank into a peaceful slumber. And again there was silence in the house. A plain old house it was, with many angles, and secret holes and corners—no place, in truth, for glowing enthusiasm and consuming passion; but it was a good old house for all that, and it lent a safe shelter to those who slept within its walls.

CHAPTER XL.

The next morning Anton hurried to Ehrenthal's. The invalid was not to be spoken to on business, and the ladies gave him so ungracious a reception that he thought it unwise to afford them any inkling of the reason of his visit. That very day he had notice given to Ehrenthal's attorney, by Councilor Horn, of twenty thousand dollars being ready in hand for the discharge of Ehrenthal's claims to that amount. As for his other demands, unsupported as they were by documentary evidence, they were to be referred to proper legal authorities. The attorney refused to accept the payment offered. Anton accordingly took the necessary steps to compel Ehrenthal at once to accept it, and to forego all claims that he had hitherto urged in connection therewith.

It was evening when Anton drew on an old office coat, and with his quickest business step proceeded to the house of Löbel

Pinkus. He looked through the window into the little bar, and, seeing the worthy Pinkus there, put a short matter of fact inquiry to him: "Mr. T. O. Schröter wishes to be informed if Schmeie Tinkeles of Brody has arrived, or is expected here. He is immediately to proceed to the firm on business."

Pinkus returned a cautious answer. Tinkeles was not there, and he did not know when he might come. Tinkeles often announced himself, and often he did not. The thing was uncertain. However, if he saw the man, he would give the message.

The next day the servant opened Anton's door, and Schmeie Tinkeles stepped in. "Welcome, Tinkeles!" cried Anton, looking at him with a smile.

The trader was astonished to see Anton. A shadow passed over his sly face, and a secret disquietude was traceable through all his voluble expression of joy. "God's miracle it surely is that I should see you again before me in the body. I have often inquired at Schröter's house, and have never been able to find out whither you were gone. I have always liked to deal with you; we have made many an excellent purchase together."

"We have had our quarrels too, Tinkeles," suggested Anton.

"That was a bad business," said Tinkeles, deprecatingly. "Now, too, there is a sad look out for trade; the grass grows in the streets; the country has had a heavy time of it. The best man did not know, when he went to sleep at night, whether he should have a leg to stand on in the morning."

"You have got through it, however, Tinkeles, and I presume you have not found it so bad, after all. Sit down; I have something to say to you."

"Why should I sit down?" said the Jew, distrustfully, as Anton shut and bolted the door. "In business one has no time for sitting down; and why do you bolt the door? Bolts are not wanted; business disturbs no one."

"I have something to say to you in confidence," said Anton to the trader. "It will do you no harm."

"Speak on, then, but leave the door open."

"Listen to me," began Anton. "You remember our last conversation when we met upon our travels?"

"I remember nothing," said the broker, shaking his head, and anxiously looking at the door.

"You gave me some good advice; and when I tried to hear further, I found you had vanished."

"These are old stories," replied Tinkeles, with growing disquiet. "I can't recall them now. I have something to do in the market; I thought you wanted to speak to me on business."

"It is business about which we are treating, and it may be a profitable business for you," said Anton, significantly. He went to his writing-table, and, taking out a roll of money, laid it on the table before Tinkeles. "This hundred dollars belongs to you if you give me the information I want."

Tinkeles slyly glanced at the roll and replied, "A hundred dollars are all very well, but I can't give you any information. I know nothing; I can not remember. Whenever I see you," he irritably went on, "bad luck follows; whenever I have had any thing to do with you, it has brought me trouble and vexation."

Anton silently went to his desk and laid another roll of money by the first. "Two hundred dollars! They are yours if you give me the information I need," said he, drawing a square around them with a piece of white chalk.

The Galician's eyes fastened greedily upon the square, to which Anton kept silently pointing. Tinkeles at first pretended indifference, but his eyes grew gradually keener, his gestures more restless. He shrugged his shoulders, raised his eyebrows, and tried hard to shake off the spell that bound him. At length he could bear it no longer; he reached out his hands for the money.

"Speak first," said Anton, placing his own hand on it.

"Do not be too severe with me," implored Tinkeles.

"Hear me," said Anton. "I want nothing unfair—nothing which an honorable man need object to. I might perhaps expose you to a legal examination, and get at what I want without cost, but I know of old your objections to law, and therefore I offer you money. If you were amenable to other motives, it would be enough to tell you that a family has been made unhappy because you did not tell me more long ago. But this would be useless with you."

"Yes," said Tinkeles, candidly, "it would be useless. Let me see the money that you have put up for me. Are there really two hundred dollars?" continued he, looking greedily at the rolls. "Very well, I know they are right. Ask me what you want to know."

"You have told me that Itzig, Ehrenthal's former bookkeeper, was plotting to ruin Baron Rothsattel?"

"Has it not turned out as I said?" asked Tinkeles.

"I have reason to assume that you spoke the truth. You mentioned two men. Who was the other?"

The trader stopped short. Anton made a feint of removing the money.

"Let it lie there," entreated Tinkeles. "The other is named Hippus, according to what I have heard. He is an old man, and has lived a long time with Löbel Pinkus."

"Is he in business?"

"He is not of our people, and not in business. He is baptized. He has been a barrister."

"Have you ever had any dealings with Itzig?"

"God preserve me from that man!" cried Tinkeles; "the very first day that he came to town he tried to open the cupboard in which my effects were. I had trouble to prevent him from stealing my clothes. I have nothing to do with such men."

"So much the better for you," replied Anton; "now hear me out. The baron has had a casket stolen, in which most important documents were kept. The robbery took place in Ehrenthal's office. Have you chanced to hear of it? or have you any suspicion as to who the thief may be?"

The Galician looked restlessly around the room, at Anton, at the money, and then, with closed eyes and a resolute tone, replied, "I have not."

"This, however, is just what I want to hear; and the money is for him who gives me information respecting it."

"If I must speak, then," said the Galician, "I must. I have heard that the man named Hippus, when drunk, has screamed, and has said, 'Now, then, we have the red cock; he is done for; owing to those papers, he is doomed.'"

"And you know nothing more?" asked Anton, in painful suspense.

"Nothing," said the Galician; "it was long ago, and I understood but little of what they said to each other."

"You have not earned the money," returned Anton, after a pause; "you have told me scarce any thing. However, that you may see the stress I lay upon obtaining information from you, take this hundred dollars; the second will be given when you can put me on the track of the thief or the lost papers. Perhaps that is not out of your power?"

"It is," said the Galician, positively, weighing the one roll in his hand, and contemplating the other. "What Itzig does, he does so as not to be overlooked; and I am a stranger in the place, and have no dealings with rogues."

"See what you can do, however," replied Anton. "As soon as you hear any thing, bring me word, and this money is yours. I need not caution you to avoid exciting Itzig's suspicions. Do not let it appear that you know me."

"I am no child," answered Tinkeles; "but I fear that I shall not be of use to you in this matter."

With that he withdrew, having hid the money in the folds of his caftan.

Anton had now heard the name of the man who had probably committed the robbery. But the difficulty of obtaining the missing documents without legal aid seemed greater than ever. Meanwhile, he would risk a bold step. He would enter into negotiations with Itzig himself, and make the best use he could of the small amount of knowledge he had gained from the Galician.

Itzig's shrewd boy opened the door to him. Anton stood opposite his former schoolfellow, who knew of his return from the baron's estate, and was prepared for this visit. The two men looked at each other for a moment, both seeking to read the countenance and manner of the other, and to arm themselves for the coming conflict. There were some things that they had in common. Both were accustomed to maintain a calm exterior, and to conceal the point at which they were aiming. Both were accustomed to rapid induction, careful speech, and cool reserve. Both had, in voice and manner, something of the formality which business gives. Both were to-day in a state of excitement, which reddened Anton's face, and even suffused Veitel's gaunt cheek-bones.

But the clear glance of the former encountered one that was unsteady and lowering; the honest earnestness of his manner was met by a mixture of presumption and obsequiousness. Each felt that his opponent was dangerous, and gathered his full strength. The conflict began. Itzig opened it in his own way. "It is a pleasure to me to see you again, Mr. Wohlfart," said he, with sudden friendliness of manner; "it is long since I have been fortunate enough to meet you. I have always taken a great interest in you; we were schoolfellows; we both came to town the same day; we have both got on in the world. I heard you were gone to America. People will talk. I hope you will remain in town now. Perhaps you will return to Mr. Schröter's office; they say he much regretted your departure." In this way he ran on, really intent to discover from Anton's aspect the purport of his call.

He had made an error in pretending not to know where Anton had been of late, for his avoidance of the name of Rothsattel firmly convinced Anton that he had cause for peculiar circumspection regarding it.

Availing himself of this mistake of Veitel's, Anton replied as coldly as though he had not heard a word of the former's introductory flourish, "I am come, Mr. Itzig, to consult you on a matter of business. You are acquainted with the circumstances connected with the family property of Baron Rothsattel, now about to be judicially sold."

"I have the sort of general information respecting it," replied Veitel, throwing himself back resolutely against the corner of the sofa, "that people have on such subjects. I have heard a good deal about it."

"You have yourself for many years, in Ehrenthal's office, conducted transactions with the baron relative to his estate, and therefore you must have exact information on the subject," returned Anton. "And as Ehrenthal is too great an invalid to enter upon business topics, I now apply to you for this information."

"What I heard in Ehrenthal's office when book-keeper there, I heard in confidence, and can not impart. I am surprised that you should ask me to do so," added Itzig, with a malicious glance.

Anton coldly replied, "I ask nothing that need interfere with the sense of duty you profess. I am simply anxious to know in whose hands the mortgages on the estate now are."

"You can easily ascertain that by reference to the mortgage-book," said Veitel, with well-assumed indifference.

"You may perhaps have heard," continued the persevering Anton, "that some of the mortgages have changed hands during the last few months, and, consequently, the present possessors are not entered in the book. It is to be presumed that the deeds have been bought to facilitate or to impede a purchase at the approaching sale."

Hitherto the conversation had been a commonplace preamble to a serious contest, something like the first moves in a game at chess or the beginning of a race. Itzig's impatience now made a decided advance.

"Have you a commission to buy the estate?" he suddenly inquired.

"We will assume that I have," replied Anton, "and that I wish your co-operation. Are you in a position to give me

information without loss of time, and will you undertake the measures rendered necessary by the sale of the mortgages?"

Itzig took time to consider. It was possible that Anton's only purpose was to secure the property to his friend Fink, or to the baron himself. In this case he was in danger of losing the fruit of his long scheming and bold deeds. If Fink, by his wealth, covered the baron, Itzig lost the estate. While thus perplexed, he remarked that Anton was watching him, and decided, with the subtlety of a bad conscience, that Anton had heard of his plans, and had some ulterior purpose. Possibly this commission to buy was but a feint. Accordingly, he hastened to promise his co-operation, and to express the hope that he might succeed, at the right time, in discovering the present possessor of the mortgages.

Anton saw that the rogue understood him, and was on his guard. Changing his mode of attack, he suddenly asked, "Do you know a certain Hippus?" and keenly observed the effect of the query.

For a moment Itzig's eyelids quivered, and a slight flush suffused his face. As if he was trying to recollect the name, he tardily replied, "Yes, I know him. He is a decayed, useless creature."

Anton saw that he had struck home. "Perhaps you recollect that, about a year and a half ago, a casket belonging to the baron, and containing deeds and papers of great importance to him, was stolen from Ehrenthal's office."

Itzig sat still, but his eyes glanced restlessly to and fro. No stranger would have observed that symptom of a bad conscience, but Anton remembered it in the boy Veitel, when accused at school of some petty theft. Itzig, he saw, knew all about the papers and the robbery.

At length, the agent replied in a tone of indifference, "I have heard of this; it occurred a short time before I left Ehrenthal's."

"Very well," continued Anton; "these papers could have no value for the thief himself. But there is reason to believe that they have found their way into the hands of a third person."

"That is not impossible, but I should hardly think it likely any one would keep up worthless papers so long."

"I know that these papers are extant—nay, I know that they are being used to the baron's prejudice."

Itzig writhed upon his seat. "Why do you speak to me upon these subjects?" said he, hoarsely.

"You will soon discover my drift," said Anton. "I know, as I before said, that the papers are still extant, and I have reason to believe that you may discover their possessor. You can gain any information you may still want respecting them from Hippus."

"Why from him?"

"He has, in the presence of witnesses, made use of expressions that plainly prove him to be acquainted with their purport."

Itzig ground his teeth, and muttered something very like the words "Drunken rascal."

Anton continued: "The casket and papers are the baron's property; and as he is less intent upon the prosecution of the thief than on the restoration of the papers, he is prepared to pay a large sum to any one who procures them."

"If," said Itzig, "the baron lays so much stress upon the recovery of the casket, how came it that so little fuss was made about it at the time of its disappearance? I never heard of the police being applied to, or of any steps being taken in connection with it."

This insolence enraged Anton. He replied indignantly, "The robbery was accompanied by circumstances which made an inquiry painful to Ehrenthal; the casket disappeared from his locked-up office, and it was probably on that account that no legal investigation was made."

Itzig rejoined, "If I remember aright, Ehrenthal informed his friends at the time that the investigation was given up out of consideration to the baron."

Anton keenly felt this home-thrust, and could hardly command himself as he replied, "It is possible that the baron may have had, at the time, other reasons for letting the subject drop."

Now, then, Veitel felt safe. He read in Anton's suppressed anger how necessary secrecy was felt. It was a *bona fide* offer; the baron was in dread of the thief. Recovering all his composure, he quietly went on to say, "As far as I know Hippus, he is a lying sort of fellow, who often gets drunk. Whatever he may have said in his cups will not, I fear, help us much in recovering the papers. Has he given you any sufficient ground for applying to him?"

Now, then, Anton had reason to be on his guard. "He has, in the presence of witnesses, made use of expressions which prove that he is acquainted with the papers, knows

where they are to be found, and purposes to make use of them."

"That may be enough for a lawyer, but not enough for a man of business," continued Veitel. "Do you know his exact words?"

Anton parried the question, and struck at his opponent by saying, "His statements are known exactly by me and by others, and have occasioned my visit to you."

Itzig had to quit this dangerous ground. "And what sum will the baron spend in the recovery of these papers? I mean to say, is it an affair that is worth the outlay of time and trouble? I have a great many other matters on hand. You could hardly expect me to devote myself, for the sake of a couple of louis-d'or, to the search of any thing so insignificant and difficult to find as papers that some one has hidden."

Years ago, when the two were traveling together to the capital, where they now met as opponents, it was the Jew-boy who was in search of papers on which his childish folly fancied his fortune dependent. At that time he was ready to buy the baron's estate for Anton, and now it was Anton who was in search of important documents, and who applied to him for the baron's property. Veitel had discovered the mysterious receipt he then looked for; he held the baron's estate in his hands, and his destiny neared its fulfillment. Both thought at the same moment of the day of their common journey.

Anton replied, "I am authorized to treat with you as to the sum; but I would observe that the matter is a pressing one. I therefore entreat you to inform me whether you are prepared to deliver the documents to the Baron Rothsattel, and to be employed in our interest as regards the purchase of the mortgages."

"I will make inquiries, and consider whether I can serve you," coldly replied Veitel.

Anton rejoined as coldly, "How much time do you require to make up your mind?"

"Three days," said the agent.

"I can only give you four-and-twenty hours," said Anton, positively. "If, in that time, you have not informed me of your intention, I shall, on the baron's behalf, take every possible step to procure the papers, or to convince myself of their destruction, and I shall use my present knowledge respecting their abstraction and hiding-place to discover the perpetrator

of the felony." Then taking out his watch, he said, "To-morrow, at the same hour, I shall call for your reply."

And so the important interview ended. As the door closed behind Anton, Itzig's resolve was taken. "Only one week," muttered he, "to my betrothal to Rosalie! The following day I shall find the notes of hand in a corner of Ehrenthal's office. Then Rothsattel and his friends must come to an arrangement upon my own terms. By the threat of a legal investigation, and of making the baron's misconduct public, I can force this Wohlfart to any thing I like. Only a week! If I hold out so long, the game is mine."

When Anton returned at the expiration of the four-and-twenty hours, he found the office closed. He called again in the evening: no one at home. The following morning the shrewd youth appeared at the door, and informed him that Mr. Itzig was gone on a journey, that he might perhaps return that very hour, but might, on the other hand, be absent for some days.

Anton knew, from his fluency, that the youth spoke according to orders given.

He next went to an official, who had the reputation of being one of the cleverest detectives in the town—cautiously disclosed the essentials respecting the stolen casket—expressed his suspicions of the robbery having been effected by Hippus, under Itzig's directions—and revealed the incomplete warnings of the worthy Tinkeles. The detective listened with attention, and at length said, "Out of all the inadequate information that you have given, the name of Hippus interests me most. He is a very dangerous character, and hitherto I have not exactly known how to get at him. On account of swindling and petty rascalities, he has often been punished, and the police have their eye upon him. I will do all I can for you, so far as he goes. I will have him and his effects searched this very day. I tell you beforehand we shall find nothing. I am further prepared to repeat this search in the course of a few days, at the risk of lowering my character in the eyes of the brave Hippus; for our trick of making thieves feel safe by means of superficially searching them may indeed answer with novices, but would never avail with this old hand. It is certain that we shall find nothing at our second search."

"Of what use can the measure be to me, then?" asked Anton, in a tone of resignation.

"Of more than you fancy. It may further your game with

the agent Itzig; for, generally speaking, the effect of a search is to make the parties uncomfortable. And though I am not quite sure how Hippus will take it, I am inclined to believe it will perplex him. That may help you on. I will see, too, that the first search be clumsily and ostentatiously made. Fortunately, he has now a settled abode again; for some time he has had a respite from us, and has grown bold. I hear, too, that he is getting old and feeble. All this may help you to catch Itzig one way or other."

This decision come to, Anton had to retire.

CHAPTER XLI.

It was a dark November evening; a fog lay heavily on the town, filling the old streets and squares, and forcing its way into the houses. It gathered round the street-lanterns, which looked like dull red balls, and gave no light a yard off. It hung over the river, rolled along the black stream, under the bridge, up the steps, and clung to the wooden pillars of the gallery. At times there would be a rift in its masses, through which the inky stream below became visible, flowing like the river of death along the dwellings of men.

The streets were empty. Here and there, close to a light, a form would be seen to emerge, and then suddenly to disappear. One of these shadows was a short man with a stoop, who unsteadily struggled onward as fast as he could. He tottered into the court where Itzig's office was, and looked up at the agent's windows. The curtains were drawn, but there was a glimmer of light to be seen through them. The little man tried to stand firm, stared at the light, clenched his fists at it, and then going up the steps, rang once, twice, thrice. At length a muffled footstep was heard, the door was opened, and the little man, entering, ran through the ante-room, which Itzig shut behind him. Itzig looked still paler than his wont, and his eyes glanced unsteadily at his untimely guest. Hippus had never been a model of manly beauty, but to-day he was positively uncanny. His features were sunken, a mixture of fear and insolence sat on his ugly face, and his eyes looked maliciously over his spectacles at his former scholar. Evidently he had been drunk; but some feverish terror had seized him, and for a moment neutralized the effects of the brandy.

"They are on me," he cried, grasping recklessly at empty air; "they are on the look-out for me!"

"Who would look out for you?" asked Itzig. But he knew only too well.

"The police, you villain!" shrieked the old man. "It is on your account that I am in trouble. I dare not go home; you must hide me."

"We are not come to that yet," returned Veitel, with all the composure he could. "How do you know that the police are at your heels?"

"The children in the street are talking of it," cried Hippus. "I heard it in the street when I was going to creep back to my hole. It was a mere chance that they did not find me in my room. They are in my house, standing on the steps, waiting till I come. You must hide me! I must have money! I will cross the border. I can't stay here any longer; you must send me off."

"Send you off!" repeated Itzig, gloomily. "Where to, pray?"

"Any where—where the police can not reach me—over the frontier—to America."

"And suppose I don't choose?" said Itzig, in a tone of enmity.

"You will choose, simpleton. Are you green enough not to know what I shall do if you don't get me out of this scrape, you varlet? They'll have quick ears at the criminal courts for what I have to tell of you."

"You would not be so wicked as to betray an old friend," said Veitel, in a tone that he vainly tried to make pathetic. "Do look at things more calmly. What danger is there, even if they do arrest you? Who can prove any thing? For want of proof they will have to let you off. You know the law as well as the judges do."

"Indeed!" screamed the old man, spitefully. "You think I shall go to prison for the sake of a fellow like you? that I shall sit eating bread and water, while you are feeding upon the fat of the land, and laughing at the old ass Hippus? I will not go to prison; I will be off; and, till I can get off, you must hide me."

"You can't remain here," darkly replied Veitel. "There is no safety here for you or me. Jacob would betray you; the people in the house would find out that you were here."

"Where best to take me is your look-out," said the man; "but I demand your help, or—"

"Hold your jaw!" said Veitel, "and listen to me. If I were disposed to give you money, and get you off by railroad to Hamburg, and over the sea, I could not do so immediately nor without aid. You must be taken by night a few miles hence to some small station on the line. I dare not hire a conveyance—that might betray you; and, as you are, you can not walk. I must look out for some opportunity of getting you off safely. Meanwhile, I must get you to some place that the police do not know you to frequent, for I fear they will look for you here. If you don't go home, they will probably come here this very night. I must go and inquire for a conveyance and a safe shelter. Meanwhile, stay in the back room till I return."

He opened the door, and Mr. Hippus slipped in like a frightened bat. But as Veitel was about to shut the door upon him, the old creature pushed between it and the wall, crying in high dudgeon, "I will not remain in the dark like a rat; you must leave me a light. I will have a light, you devil!"

"They will see from below that there is a light in the room, and that will betray us."

"I will not sit in the dark!" screamed the old man once more.

Muttering a curse, Veitel took up the lamp and carried it into the inner room. Then he closed the door and hurried into the street. Very cautiously he approached the dwelling of Löbel Pinkus. There all was still; and, looking into the bar, he discerned Pinkus sitting among his guests in all the security of a good conscience. He crept up the steps to his former abode, then took some rusty keys from a hidden corner, carefully examined the sleeping-room, and saw with satisfaction that it was both dark and empty. He hurried on to the gallery, where he remained for a moment looking at the rolling cloud-masses and the dusky stream. Every thing was favorable, but there was not an instant to be lost, for a capricious breeze sometimes blew over the water, and the fog seemed to be breaking up. In a short time the wind would clearly reveal the stream, the outlines of the houses, and the lanterns, which now looked like red specks at the corners of the streets.

Itzig hurried on next to the end of the gallery, and turned the key in a door which concealed the way down the steps. The door creaked as it opened. Itzig went down to the river and tried to ascertain its depth. The platform which ran along

the base of the houses, and which was generally visible the whole year through, was covered; but a few strides through the water would lead from these steps to those of the neighboring house. Veitel stared down into the river, and put his foot into it to see how deep one would have to wade before reaching those steps. So occupied was he with the escape of the old man, that he did not heed, did not even feel the cold. The water rose to his knee. He looked round once more. All was darkness, mist, silence, like that of the grave, but for the wail of the water and the rising wind.

Meanwhile Hippus tried to make himself comfortable. After having sent all manner of curses after Veitel, he gave his troubled mind to the investigation of the room. He went to a low cupboard, turned the key, and looked for some fluid that might restore his sinking strength and refresh his parched gums. He found a bottle of rum, poured its contents into a glass, and gulped it down as fast as the fiery nature of the poison allowed. A cold sweat immediately broke out on his brow, and, drawing a remnant of a handkerchief from his pocket, he hurriedly wiped his face, and reeled up and down the room, talking to himself.

"He is a fool! a rascally, cowardly hare! a miserable chafferer! If I wanted to sell him this old handkerchief, he could not help buying; it is his nature; he is a despicable creature. And he tries to defy me, and put me in prison; and he is to sit, forsooth, on this sofa, with the rum-bottle at his side—the scoundrel!" Then taking up the empty bottle, he dashed it against the woodwork of the sofa and broke it to pieces. "Who was he?" he went on, in increasing rage; "a chaffering jack-pudding. I have made him what he is, the noodle. If I whistle, he dances; he is only the decoy, I am the bird-catcher." Here Hippus tried to whistle a tune, and to execute a few steps. Again the cold sweat rained from his brow, and, taking out his handkerchief, he dried his face, and carefully replaced the rag in his pocket. "He does not return," he suddenly cried; "he leaves me here, and they will find me." Then running to the door and violently shaking it, "The villain has locked me in—a Jew has locked me in!" shrieked the miserable creature, wringing his hands. "I am to die of hunger and thirst in this prison. Oh, he has used me ill—used his benefactor basely; he is an ungrateful wretch, an unnatural son!" At this he began to sob: "I have nursed him when he was sick, I have taught him knowing tricks, I have

made a man of him, and this is how he rewards his old friend." The lawyer wept aloud. Suddenly stopping before the mirror, he started at his own reflection. His eyes flashed still more angrily as, pushing his spectacles more firmly on, he examined the frame. He knew that mirror. Had chance brought one of the articles belonging to his better days into Pinkus's secret stores, and thence to Veitel's room, or did some resemblance mislead the drunkard? At all events, the thoughts it awoke of his former position filled him with rage. "It is my mirror," he screamed—"my own mirror that the rascal has here;" and, rushing wildly about the room, he snatched up a chair, and struck the mirror with it. The glass soon rattled down in a hundred pieces, but he went on belaboring the frame and screaming like a madman. "It hung in my house; the rogue has stolen my mirror—he has stolen my prosperity." He poured forth hideous imprecations against the supposed thief.

At that moment Veitel rushed in, having heard the noise from the ante-room, and guessing its cause. As soon as the lawyer saw him, he ran at him with the raised chair, crying out, "You have brought me to want, and you shall pay for it," aimed a blow at Itzig's head. But the latter pushed the chair away, and seized hold of the old man with all his strength. Hippus struggled and cursed in vain.

Veitel forced him down into a corner of the sofa, and whispered, as he held him down, "If you do not keep quiet, old man, it's all over with you."

When the drunkard saw in Itzig's eyes, which were fixed upon his, that he had the worst to apprehend from his anger, the paroxysm left him, he sank down powerless, and muttered in a low voice, while shuddering all over, "He will kill me."

"Not if you are quiet, you drunken fool; what devil drove you to destroy my room?"

"He will kill me," mumbled the old man, "because I have found my mirror."

"You are mad," cried Veitel, shaking him. "Collect your senses; you can't stay here. You must come away; I have a hiding-place for you."

"I won't go with you," wailed Hippus; "you want to kill me."

Veitel uttered a horrible curse, took up the old man's shabby hat, forced it on, and, seizing him by the neck, cried, "You must come, or you are lost. The police will look for

you here—and find you too, if you lose any more time. Come, or you'll oblige me to do you a mischief."

The old man's strength was broken; he wavered. Veitel took him by the arm, and drew him unresistingly away. He took him down the steps, anxiously looking round for fear of meeting any one.

In the cold night air the lawyer's senses partially returned, and Veitel enjoined him to be silent, and to follow him, and he would get him off.

"He will get me off," mechanically repeated Hippus, running along at his side. As they neared Pinkus's house, Veitel proceeded more cautiously. Leading his companion through the dark ground floor, and whispering, "Take my hand, and come quietly up stairs with me," they reached the large public room, which was still empty. Much relieved, Veitel said, "There is a hiding-place in the next house; you must go there."

"I must go there," repeated the old man.

"Follow me," cried Veitel, leading him along the gallery, and then down the covered staircase.

The old man tottered down the steps, firmly holding the coat of his guide, who had almost to carry him. In this way they came down step after step till they reached the last one, over which water was rushing. Veitel went first, and unconcernedly stepped up to his knee in the stream, only intent upon leading the old man after him.

As soon as Hippus felt the cold on his boot, he stood still and cried out, "Water!"

"Hush!" angrily whispered Veitel; "not a word."

"Water!" screamed the old man. "Help! he will murder me!"

Veitel seized him and put his hand on his mouth; but the fear of death had again roused the lawyer's energies, and, placing his foot on the next step, he clung as firmly as he could to the banisters, and again screamed out, "Help!"

"Accursed wretch!" muttered Veitel, gnashing his teeth with rage at this determined resistance; then, forcing his hat over his face, he took him by the neckcloth with all his strength, and hurled him into the water. There was a splash—a heavy fall—a hollow gurgling—and all was still.

Beneath the leaden clouds that overhung the river, a dark mass might be seen rolling along with the current. Soon it disappeared; the mist concealed it; the stream rushed on;

the water broke wailingly over the steps and palings, and the night-wind kept howling out its monotonous complaint.

The murderer stood for a few moments motionless in the darkness, leaning against the staircase railings. Then he slowly went up the steps. While doing so he felt his trowsers to see how high up they were wet. He thought to himself that he must dry them at the stove this very night, and saw in fancy the fire in the stove, and himself sitting before it in his dressing-gown, as he was accustomed to do when thinking over his business. If he had ever in his life known comfortable repose, it had been when, weary of the cares of the day, he sat before his stove-fire and watched it till his heavy eyelids drooped. He realized how tired he was now, and what good it would do him to go to sleep before a warm fire. Lost in the thought, he stood for a moment like one overcome with drowsiness, when suddenly he felt a strange pressure within him—something that made it difficult to breathe, and bound his breast as with iron bars. Then he thought of the bundle that he had just thrown into the river; he saw it cleave the flood; he heard the rush of water, and remembered that the hat which he had forced over the man's face had been the last thing visible on the surface—a round, strange-looking thing. He saw the hat quite plainly before him—battered, the rim half off, and two grease-spots on the crown. It had been a very shabby hat. Thinking of it, it occurred to him that he could smile now if he chose. But he did not smile. Meanwhile he had got up the steps. As he opened the staircase door, he glanced along the dark gallery through which two had passed a few minutes before, and only one returned. He looked down at the gray surface of the stream, and again he was sensible of that singular pressure. He rapidly crept through the large room and down the steps, and on the ground floor ran up against one of the lodgers in the caravansera. Both hastened away in different directions without exchanging a word.

This meeting turned his thoughts into another direction. Was he safe? The fog still lay thick on the street. No one had seen him go in with Hippus, no one had recognized him as he went out. The investigation would only begin when they found the old man in the river. Would he be safe then?

These thoughts passed through the murderer's mind as calmly as though he were reading them in a book. Mingled with them came doubts as to whether he had his cigar-case

with him, and as to why he did not smoke a cigar. He cogitated long about it, and at length found himself returned to his dwelling. He opened the door; the last time he had opened the door a loud noise had been heard in the inner room. He listened for it now. He would give any thing to hear it. A few minutes ago it had been to be heard. Oh, if those few minutes had never been! Again he felt that hollow pressure, but more strongly, ever more strongly than before. He entered the room, the lamp still burned, the fragments of the rum-bottle lay about the sofa, the bits of broken mirror shone like silver dollars on the floor. Veitel sat down exhausted. Then it occurred to him that his mother had often told him a childish story in which silver dollars fell upon a poor man's floor. He could see the old Jewess sitting at the hearth, and he, a small boy, standing near her. He could see himself looking anxiously down on the dark earthen floor, wondering whether the white dollars would fall down for him. Now he knew—his room looked just as if there had been a rain of white dollars. He felt something of the restless delight which that tale of his mother had always awaked, when again came suddenly that same hollow pressure. Heavily he rose, stooped, and collected the broken glass. He put all the pieces into a corner of the cupboard, detached the frame from the wall, and put it wrong-side out in a corner. Then he took the lamp, and the glass which he used to fill with water for the night; but as he touched it a shudder came over him, and he put it down. He who was no more had drunk out of that glass. He took the lamp to his bedside and undressed. He hid his trowsers in the cupboard, and brought out another pair, which he rubbed against his boots till they were dirty at the bottom. Then he put out the lamp, and as it flickered before it went quite out, the thought struck him that human life and a flame had something in common. He had extinguished a flame. And again that pain in the breast, but less clearly felt, for his strength was exhausted, his nervous energy spent. The murderer slept.

But when he wakes! Then the cunning will be over and gone with which his distracted mind has tried, as if in delirium, to snatch at all manner of trivial things and thoughts in order to avoid the one feeling which ever weighs him down. When he wakes! Henceforth, while still half asleep, he will feel the gradual entrance of terror and misery into his soul. Even in his dreams he will have a sense of the sweetness of

unconsciousness and the horrors of thought, and will strive against waking; while, in spite of his strivings, his anguish grows stronger and stronger, till, in despair, his eyelids start open, and he gazes into the hideous present, the hideous future.

And again his mind will seek to cover over the fact with a web of sophistry; he will reflect how old the dead man was, how wicked, how wretched; he will try to convince himself that it was only an accident that occasioned his death—a push given by him in sudden anger—how unlucky that the old man's foot should have slipped as it did! Then will recur the doubt as to his safety; a hot flush will suffuse his pale face, the step of his servant will fill him with dread, the sound of an iron-shod stick on the pavement will be taken for the tramp of the armed band whom justice sends to apprehend him. Again he will retrace every step he took yesterday, every gesture, every word, and will seek to convince himself that discovery is impossible. No one had seen him, no one had heard; the wretched old man, half crazy as he was, had drawn his own hat over his eyes and drowned himself.

And yet, through all this sophistry, he is conscious of that fearful weight, till, exhausted by the inner conflict, he flies from his house to his business, amid the crowd anxiously desiring to find something that shall force him to forget. If any one on the street looks at him, he trembles; if he meet a policeman, he must rush home to hide his terror from those discerning eyes. Wherever he finds familiar faces, he will press into the thick of the assembly, he will take an interest in anything, will laugh and talk more than heretofore; but his eyes will roam recklessly around, and he will be in constant dread of hearing something said of the murdered man, something surmised about his sudden end. He may deceive his acquaintance: they will perhaps consider him remarkably cheerful, and one and the other will say, "Itzig is a good fellow; he is getting on in business." He will hang on many an arm that he never touched before, will tell merry stories, and go home gladly with any one who asks him, because he knows that he can not be alone. He will frequent the coffee-houses and beer-shops to hunt out acquaintance, and will drink and be as much excited as they, because he knows that he dare not be alone.

And when, late of an evening, he returns home, tired to death and worn out by his fearful struggle, he feels lighter hearted, for he has succeeded in obscuring the truth, he is con-

scious of a melancholy pleasure in his weariness, and awaits sleep as the only good thing earth has still to offer him. And again he will fall asleep, and when he awakes the next morning he will have to begin his fearful task anew. So will it be this day, next day, always, so long as he lives. His life is no longer like that of another man; his life is henceforth a battle, a horrible battle with a corpse, a battle unseen by all, yet constantly going on. All his intercourse with living men, whether in business or in society, is but a mockery, a lie. Whether he laughs and shakes hands with one, or lends money and takes fifty per cent. from another, it is all mere illusion on their part. He knows that he is severed from human companionship, and that all he does is but empty seeming; there is only one who occupies him, against whom he struggles, because of whom he drinks, and talks, and mingles with the crowd, and that one is the corpse of the old man in the water.

CHAPTER XLII.

Besides all friendly house-sprites and household divinities, there is one other in the secret, and silently triumphant at Anton's return, and that is the cousin.

Strangers indeed may shake their heads at much that passes, but she knows better: that Anton should sit all day long pale and silent in the office; Sabine evince a tendency to blush in her brother's presence, which never appeared before; sit silent for hours over her work, then silently start up and rush through the house, playful as a kitten after a ball of twine; the merchant himself keep constantly looking at Anton, and growing more and more merry from day to day, so that at last he positively rallies the cousin without ceasing—all this, indeed, may seem perplexing, but it was not so to one who had known for years what each of them liked for dinner (although she only ventured to present the favorite dish in order, once a month), who had with their own hands knitted their stockings and starched their collars. She accounted for all their inconsistencies most naturally.

The good lady took all the credit of Anton's return entirely to herself. She had determined to restore her favorite to the office, and she had had no ulterior intention, at least so she declared; for, in spite of the rose-lined coverlet and the embroidered curtains, she knew that the house to which she be-

longed was a proud house, which had ways of its own, and required very skillful management. And, indeed, when told that Anton was only to be a guest, she was herself in some uncertainty. But soon she got the upper hand of the merchant and his sister, for she made discoveries.

The second story of the house had been uninhabited for years. The merchant and his young wife had occupied it in the lifetime of his parents. When he had lost one after another, parents, wife, and baby son, he moved to the first floor, and since then had seldom gone up stairs. Gray blinds hung down there the whole year through; the furniture and paintings were all covered up; in short, the whole story was like an enchanted castle, and even the ladies' footsteps fell softer when they were obliged to pass through the silent region.

The cousin was coming up stairs one day. In spite of her endless war with Pix, she had contrived to keep one small room to dry linen in. She was just musing upon the change official life made in men's characters, for Balbus, the successor of Pix, on whose humble bearing she had founded great hopes, showed himself in his new post just as aggressive as his predecessor. She had once more found a heap of cigar-boxes outside the three compartments which Pix had erected by main force in her own special domain, and she was just going to declare war against Balbus on their account. At that moment she remarked a door of the upper story wide open, and thought of thieves, and of calling out for help, but, upon consideration, judicially determined first to investigate the mystery. She crept into the curtained rooms, and was in some danger of being petrified with amazement when she saw her nephew standing there alone, looking at a picture of his departed wife, taken as a bride, in white silk, with a myrtle-wreath in her hair. The cousin could not restrain a sympathizing sigh. The merchant turned round in amazement. "I mean to remove the picture to my own room," said he, softly.

"But you have another portrait of Mary there already, and this one has always depressed you," cried the cousin.

"Years make us calmer," replied the merchant; "and, in course of time, another bride may come here."

The cousin's eyes flashed as she repeated "Another!"

"It was only a passing idea," said the merchant, cheerfully walking through the suite of rooms, followed by the cousin, proudly shrugging her shoulders. They might try to blind her as much as they liked; it was all in vain.

Neither did the cautious Sabine succeed any better.

Anton had silently sat near the cousin at dinner. When he rose, the good lady remarked that Sabine's eyes rested with an expression of tender anxiety upon his pale face, and then filled with tears. As soon as he had left the room, she moved to the window that looked into the court. The cousin crept behind her, and looked out too. Sabine was gazing down intently; suddenly she smiled, and her face was perfectly transfigured. Yet there was nothing to be seen but Anton, with his back toward them, caressing Pluto, who barked and jumped up at him.

"Oh!" thought the cousin, "it is not over Pluto that she laughs and cries at once."

And soon after, one day that the merchant opened the drawing-room door and called his sister out, the cousin spied a man with a great parcel standing in the hall. Her sharp eyes recognized in him a porter from one of the great draper's shops. The brother and sister went into the ante-room, a murmur of voices was heard, and a sound uncommonly like suppressed sobs. When Sabine returned her eyes were very red, but she looked happy and bashful. When the cousin went into the ante-room on some pretext or other, the great parcel was lying on a chair; and as she touched it—of course accidentally—and the paper was not tied up, it came to pass that she beheld its contents—a variety of exquisite dresses, and one thing that moved her to tears: it was that white robe of thickest silk which a woman only wears once in her life—on one solemn day of devout and trembling joy.

From that moment the cousin went about her avocations with the comfortable confidence of a good housewife, who forgives people, even though for a season they do behave themselves foolishly, knowing that the end of it all will be great excitement in her own especial province—hard work in the kitchen, a long bill of fare, great slaughter of fowls, and immense consumption of preserved fruit. She, too, waxed mysterious now. The store-room was subjected to a careful inspection, and new dishes often appeared at dinner. On such days the cousin would come from the kitchen with very red cheeks, and look at the merchant and Sabine with an expression which plainly said, "I have found you out," and was met with a severe glance from the master of the house.

And yet he was no longer severe now. Sabine and Anton grew daily more silent and reserved; he became more cheer-

ful, far less silent than of yore, was never weary of drawing Anton into conversation, and listened with intense attention to each word he spoke. There was still a great flatness in trade, but he did not appear to heed it. When Mr. Braun, the agent, poured out his oppressed heart, he only laughed and returned a dry jest.

Anton, however, did not observe the change. When in the office, he sat silently opposite Mr. Baumann, and seemed to think of nothing but his correspondence. The evenings he generally spent alone in his room, burying himself in the books Fink had left, and trying to escape from his own dark thoughts. He did not find the firm as he had left it: several of its old mercantile connections were dissolved, several new ones entered into. He found new agents, new descriptions of goods, and new servants.

The clerks' apartments, too, had grown silent. With the exception of Mr. Liebold and Mr. Purzel, who had never been exciting social elements, he only found Baumann and Specht remaining of all his former acquaintances, and they, too, thought of leaving. Baumann had, immediately on Anton's return, confided to the principal that he must leave in the spring, and this time Anton's earnest representations failed to shake the future missionary's firm resolve: "I can no longer delay," said he; "my conscience protests against it. I go from hence to the London Training College, and thence wherever they choose to send me. I confess that I have a preference for Africa: there are certain kings there"—he pronounced several crack-jaw names—"that I can not think wholly ill of. There must be some hope of conversion among them. I trust to wean them from that heathenish slave-trade. They may make use of their people at home in planting sugar-cane and cultivating rice. In a couple of years I will send you, by way of London, the first samples of our produce."

Mr. Specht, too, came to Anton. "You have always been friendly to me, Wohlfart, and I should like to have your opinion. I am to marry a very accomplished girl; her name is Fanny, and she is a niece of Pix."

"What!" said Anton, "and do you love the young lady?"

"Yes, that I do," cried Specht, enthusiastically; "but, if I am to marry her, I am to enter into Pix's business, and that is what I want your opinion about. My lady-love has some fortune, and Pix thinks it would be best invested in his firm.

Now you know Pix is a good fellow at bottom, but another partner might suit me better."

"I think not, my good old Specht," said Anton; "you are apt to be a little too precipitate, and it would be very well for you to have a steady partner."

"Yes," said Specht; "but only think of the branches he has chosen. No one could have believed it possible that our Pix would have taken to them."

"What are they, then?" asked Anton.

"All sorts of things," cried Specht, "that he never saw before. Skins and leather, and every kind of fur, from the sable to the mole, and, besides, hemp and brushes—every thing, in short, that is hairy and bristling. These are very low articles, Wohlfart."

"Don't be a child," replied Anton; "marry, my good fellow, and trust to the management of your uncle-in-law; it will do you no harm."

The next day Pix himself came to Anton's room. "I found your card, Wohlfart, and come to invite you to coffee on Sunday next. Cuba, and a Manilla! You will make my wife's acquaintance."

"And so you are going to take Specht as your partner?" asked Anton, smiling. "You used to have a great horror of partnerships."

"I should not enter into one with any body else. Between ourselves, I owe the poor fellow some compensation, and I can make the ten thousand dollars he is marrying useful in my business. I have undertaken a retail warehouse, in which I will place him. That will amuse him. He can be polite to the ladies all day long, and can have a new fur coat every winter. He will come out much stronger there than here in the office."

"How comes it that you have chosen this branch of trade?"

"I was obliged," was the reply. "I found a great stock on hand left by my predecessor in sorry plight, I can assure you, and was thrown all at once among those who valued hare-skins and pig's bristles exceedingly."

"And that alone decided you?" replied Anton, laughing.

"Perhaps something else as well," said Pix. "I could not remain here on account of my wife; and you will admit, Anton, that I, who was manager of the provincial department of this firm, could not open another in the same town of the same nature. I know the whole provincial department better

than the principal, and all small traders know me better than they do him. I might have injured this house, though my capital is so much smaller. I should, no doubt, have got on, but this house would have suffered; so I was obliged to turn to something else. I went to Schröter as soon as I had decided, and talked it over to him. I only keep one thing in common with you here, and that is horse-hair, and in that I beat you hollow. I have told the principal so."

"The firm can bear that," said Anton, and shook the fur-merchant by the hand.

But it was not in the office only; even among the porters around the great scales a change was observable. Father Sturm, the faithful friend of the house, threatened to quit both it and this little ball of earth together. One of Anton's first inquiries, on his return, had been for Father Sturm. He was told that Sturm had been unwell for some weeks, and did not leave his room. Full of anxiety, Anton went to the dwelling of the giant the second evening after his arrival.

While still in the street, he heard a loud hum, as though a swarm of gigantic bees had settled in the red-painted house. When he entered, the hum sounded like the distant roar of a family of lions. He knocked in amazement. No one answered. When he had opened the door he stood still on the threshold, for at first he could see nothing but a dense smoke, through which a yellow speck of light appeared, with a great halo round it. Gradually he discovered in this smoke a few rotund forms, placed around the candle like so many planets around the sun, and at times something was seen to move, possibly a man's arm, but not unlike an elephant's leg. At length the air through the open door partially cleared away the smoke, and he could see farther into the room. Six giants sat around the table—three on a bench, three on oaken chairs. All had cigars in their mouths, and wooden beer-mugs on the table, and the loud hum was their speech, duly lowered to suit a sick-room.

"I smell something," cried a loud voice, at length; "there must be a man there. I feel a cool draught; the door is open. Let whoever is there say who he is."

"Mr. Sturm," cried Anton, still on the threshold.

The great globes rapidly revolved and eclipsed the light.

"Do you hear?" cried the loud voice; "a man is there."

"Yes, and an old friend too," replied Anton.

"I know that voice," exclaimed some one at the other side of the table.

Anton drew nearer; the porters all rose and called out his name.

Father Sturm moved along to the farthest end of his bench, and held out both his hands. "I heard from my comrades that you had returned. It is a joy to me that you are come safe and sound from that outlandish country."

Anton's hand now passed first into that of old Sturm, who powerfully grasped it, and then tried to set the broken bones; next into that of the other five porters, whence it came out red, weak, and slightly dislocated, so that he was glad to put it into his coat pocket. While the five were exchanging greetings with him, one after the other, Sturm suddenly called out, "When does my Karl come?"

"Have you sent for him, then?" asked Anton.

"Sent for him! No," returned Sturm, shaking his head, "that I could not do, because of his situation as bailiff; for if I were to write him word 'come,' he would come if even a million scythes lay in his way. But then the family might want him, and therefore, unless he comes of his own accord, he will not come."

"He will come in the spring," said Anton, looking anxiously into the father's face.

Old Sturm shook his head. "He will not come in the spring—not to me, at least. Perhaps my little manikin may come here, but not to his father any more." He raised his can of beer and took a long draught, then shut down the lid, cleared his throat, and, looking full into Anton's face, solemnly rapped the table. "Fifty!" said he; "one other fortnight, and then it comes."

Anton threw his arm round the old man's shoulders, and looked inquiringly at the others, who held their cigars in their hands, and stood round like the chorus in a Greek tragedy.

"Look you, Mr. Wohlfart," said the chorus-leader, who, considered as a man, was colossal, but as a giant something less than old Sturm, "I will explain matters to you: This man thinks that he is getting weaker, and shall go on getting weaker, and that in a few weeks the day will come when we porters must each take a lemon in our hands, and put a black tail on our hats. We do not wish this." All shook their heads here and looked disapprovingly at Sturm. "There is an old dispute between him and us about the age of fifty. He is determined to be right—that is the whole of it—and our opinion is that he is not right. He has become weaker—that

may be. Many are stronger at one time, and weaker at another. Why should the man think of leaving this place on that account? I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Wohlfart, it is downright absurdity on his part."

All the giants confirmed this statement by nodding their heads.

"So, then, he is sick?" inquired Anton, anxiously. "Whereabouts is your complaint, old friend?"

"It is here and there," replied Sturm. "It is in the air—it comes on slowly—it takes first the strength, then the breath. It begins with the legs, and then moves up." He pointed to his feet.

"Is it a trouble to you to stand?" asked Anton.

"That is just what it is," replied Sturm. "It is a sour trial, and every day more and more so; but, Wilhelm," continued he, addressing the spokesman of the party, "in a fortnight that will be all over, and there will then be no more sourness, except, perhaps, a little in your faces for an hour or two, till evening, when you must come back here and sit down, and talk of old Sturm as of a comrade who has laid him down to rest, and who will never lift another burden; for I fancy that yonder, where we go, there will be nothing heavy."

"You hear him!" said Wilhelm, anxiously. "He is getting absurd again."

"What says the doctor to your complaint?" suddenly inquired Anton.

"The doctor!" said old Sturm; "if he were to be asked about me, he would have enough to say. But we do not ask him. Between ourselves, there is no use in a doctor. They may know what is the matter with many men, that I don't deny; but how should they know what is the matter with us? Not one of them can lift a barrel."

"If you have no doctor, my good Mr. Sturm," cried Anton, throwing open the window, "let me begin at once to play a doctor's part. If your breathing be oppressed, this close atmosphere is poison to you; and if you suffer from your feet, you ought not to go on drinking." And he moved the beer-mug to another table.

"Hum, hum, hum!" said Sturm, watching his proceedings; "well meant, but of no use. A little smoke keeps one warm, and we are accustomed to the beer. After I have sat on this bench all day alone, without work or company, it is a pleasure to me that my friends should come and enjoy themselves

with me of an evening. They talk to me, and I get some tidings of the business, and of what is going on in the world."

"But you yourself, at least, might abstain from beer and tobacco," replied Anton; "your Karl would tell you the same; and, as he is away, you must let me take his place." Then turning to the others, "I will convince him that he is wrong; leave me alone with him for half an hour."

The giants left the room. Anton sat by the invalid and spoke on the father's favorite topic—spoke of his son.

Sturm forgot all his dark forebodings, and got into excellent spirits.

At last he turned to Anton with his eyes shut, and said, confidentially, "Nineteen hundred dollars. He came here once again."

"But you gave him nothing?" anxiously inquired Anton.

"Only a hundred dollars," said the old man, apologetically. "He is dead now, the poor young gentleman. He looked so handsome with his epaulettes. While a man is a son, he ought not to die: it gives too much sorrow."

"I have spoken of your claim to Herr von Fink," said Anton; "he will see that you are paid."

"That Karl is paid," suggested old Sturm, looking round; "and you, Mr. Wohlfart, will undertake to give into my boy's hands what remains in the chest, if I do not myself see my little fellow."

"If you don't give up this idea," cried Anton, "I shall become your foe, and shall treat you with the greatest severity. Early to-morrow morning you may expect me to bring you Mr. Schröter's doctor."

"He is a worthy man, no doubt," said Sturm; "his horses must be remarkably well fed, they are so fat and strong, but he can do nothing for me."

The following morning the doctor visited the invalid.

"I don't consider his case a serious one as yet," said he; "his feet are swollen, indeed, but that might soon be cured. However, his sedentary inactive life is so bad for a frame like his, and his diet is so unwholesome, that I am sorry to say the sudden development of some serious complaint is only too likely."

Anton immediately wrote off this opinion to Karl, and added, "Under these circumstances, your father's own impression that he shall not survive his fiftieth birth-day makes me very uneasy. It would be well that you should be with him at that time."

Several days had now elapsed since Anton had written this letter, and, meanwhile, he had paid a daily visit to Sturm, who did not appear to change for the worse, but yet remained firm in his resolve of not outliving his birth-day. One morning a servant came to Anton's room, and announced that Sturm the porter urgently wished to see him.

"Is he worse?" inquired Anton, in dismay; "I will go to him immediately."

"He is at the door in a cart," said the servant.

Anton hurried out. A carrier's cart was standing there, with great barrel-hoops bent over the wicker-work, and covered by a white sheet, from which—a corner of it being turned back—the head of Father Sturm, ensconced in a colossal fur cap, appeared. He wore an anxious face, and, as soon as he saw Anton, held out a sheet of paper. "Read this, Mr. Wohlfart; I have had such a letter from my poor Karl! I must go to him at once. To the estate beyond Rosmin," he added to the driver, a burly carrier who stood by the vehicle.

Anton looked at the letter. It was written in the forester's clumsy characters, and the contents amazed him. "My dear father, I can not come to you, for a scythe-man has cut off the remainder of my hand, on which account I beg you, as soon as you get this, to set out to your poor son. You must take a large conveyance and drive to Rosmin. There you must stop at the Red Deer. A carriage and a servant from the estate will be waiting for you. The servant does not understand a word of German, but he is a good fellow, and will know you when he sees you. You must buy yourself a fur for the journey, and fur boots which must come above your knees, and be lined with leather. If you can't find any large enough for your great legs, godfather Kürschner must, during the night, sew a skin over your feet. Greet Mr. Wohlfart from me. Your faithful Karl."

Anton held the letter in his hand, not exactly knowing what to make of it.

"What do you say to this new misfortune?" asked the giant, mournfully.

"At all events, you must go to your son at once," was Anton's reply.

"Of course I must," said the porter; "this blow comes heavily upon me just now; the day after to-morrow I shall be fifty."

The meaning of the letter now flashed upon Anton. "Are you accoutred according to Karl's directions?"

"I am," said the giant, throwing back the linen covering; "all is right, the fur and the boots too."

Anton looked in, and had some trouble to preserve his gravity. Sturm looked like a pre-Adamic bear of colossal dimensions. A great sword leaned against the seat. "Against those scythe-men!" said he, angrily shaking it. "I have still one other request to make you. Wilhelm has got the key of my house; will you take charge of this box? it holds what was formerly under my bed. Keep it for Karl."

"I will give it into Mr. Schröter's care," replied Anton; "he is just gone to the railway station, and may be back any moment."

"Greet him from me," said the giant; "greet him and Miss Sabine, and tell them both how heartily I thank them for all the friendliness they have shown to Karl and me." He looked in with emotion at the ground floor. "Many a happy year I have worked away there, and if the rings on the hundred weights are well polished, these hands have done their part to make them so. I have shared the fate of this house for thirty years, good and bad, and I can tell you, Mr. Wohlfart, we were always wide awake. I shall roll your barrels no more," continued he, turning to the servants, "and some one else will help you to unload the wagons. Think often of old Sturm when you fasten up a sugar-cask. Nothing here below can last forever, not even the strongest; but this firm, Mr. Wohlfart, will stand and flourish so long as it has a chief like Mr. Schröter, and men like you, and good hands below there at the great scales. This is my heart's wish." He folded his hands, and tears rolled down his cheeks. "And now farewell, Mr. Wohlfart; give me your hand; and farewell Peter, Franz, Gottfried—all of you, think kindly of me. To Rosmin, driver." The cart rolled away over the pavement, the sheet opening once more, and Sturm's great head emerging for a last look and wave of the hand.

Anton was exceedingly anxious about him for a few days, when a letter came in Karl's own hand.

"Dear Mr. Wohlfart," wrote Karl, "you will of course have seen why I sent that last note to my Goliath. I had to get him out of that room, and to drive that notion about his birth-day out of his head; so, in my anxiety, I hazarded a white lie. This is how it all came about:

"The day before his birth-day, the servant was waiting for him at the Red Deer in Rosmin. I had ridden over there myself to see how my father got on, and how he looked; but I kept myself out of sight. About midday the cart came slowly rumbling up. The driver helped my father out—for he had great difficulty in moving—which at first gave me a fright about his legs; but it was really mainly owing to the fur boots and the jolting. On the street the old boy took out a letter and read it. Then he went up to Jasch, who had run to the cart, and who had to pretend that he did not understand a word of German, and began to make all manner of alarming gesticulations. He held his hand two feet above the pavement, and when the servant shook his head, the governor stooped down to the ground. This was meant to signify, "My manikin!" but as Jasch failed to understand it, my father caught hold of one hand with the other, and shook it so violently under Jasch's nose, that the servant, who, without this, was frightened at the great creature, was near taking to his heels. At length my father and his effects were packed into a spring-cart, he having several times walked round, and shaken it rather mistrustfully. Then he drove off. I had told the servant to drive straight to the forester's, with whom I had planned every thing. As for me, I had gone there by a by-path; and as soon as the wagon arrived in the evening, I slipped into the forester's bed, and had my hand tied down under the clothes for fear I should stretch it out in my delight. When the old gentleman reached my bedside, he was so moved that he wept, and it went to my heart to be obliged to cheat him. I told him that I was better already, and that the doctor would allow me to get up on the morrow. This quieted him; and he said, with a most solemn mien, that he was glad of that, for that the morrow was a great day for him, and that he must then take to his bed. And so he went on with his nonsense. But not long. He soon got cheerful. The forester joined us, and we made a very good supper on what the young lady had sent us from the castle. I gave the old boy beer, which he pronounced execrable; whereupon the forester made some punch, and we all three drank heartily—I with my amputated hand, my father with his melancholy forebodings, and the forester. What with the long journey, the warm room, and the punch, my father soon got sleepy (I had had a strong bedstead placed in the forester's room); he kissed my head as he wished me good-night, tapped the quilt, and said,

'To-morrow, then, my manikin!' He was asleep in a moment; and how he slept, to be sure! I got out of the forester's bed, and watched every breath he drew. It was a weary night. The next morning he woke late. As soon as he began to stir, the forester came in, clapping his hands at the door, and exclaiming over and over again, 'Why, Mr. Sturm, what have you done?' 'What have I done?' asked my Goliath, still half asleep, and looking round in amazement. The birds were screaming very loud, and every thing looked so strange to him he hardly knew if he was still on earth or not. 'Where am I?' cried he; 'this place is not in the Bible.' However, the forester went on exclaiming, 'No; such a thing never was heard of before,' till the old man was quite alarmed, and anxiously asked what it was. 'What you have done, Mr. Sturm!' cried the forester; 'why, you have slept a night, and then a day, and then another night!' 'How so?' said my old boy; 'to-day is Wednesday, the 13th.' 'No such thing,' affirmed the forester; 'to-day is the 14th: it is Thursday.' So they went on disputing. At last the forester took out his pocket-book, on which he strikes out each day as it passes, and there was a great stroke over Wednesday; and on Tuesday he had put down as a memorandum, 'To-day, at seven o'clock, the bailiff's father arrived: a very tall man, can drink plenty of punch;' and on Wednesday, 'The bailiff's father has been asleep the whole day through.' Having read this, my governor got quite composed, and said, 'It's all correct: here we have it in black and white. Tuesday, I arrived at seven—a tall man—plenty of punch; all this tallies. Wednesday is past. This is Thursday — this is the 14th.' After some musing, he cried, 'Where is my son Karl?' Then I entered, my arm bound up, and told the same tale as the forester, till he said, 'I am like one bewitched; I don't know what to think.' 'Why, don't you see,' said I, 'that I am out of bed? Yesterday, when you were asleep, the doctor came, and gave me leave to get up. Now I am so well that I can lift this chair with my stiff arm.' 'No more weights,' said the old man. Then I went on: 'I spoke of your case, too, to the doctor. He is a skillful man, and told us one of two things would happen: either you would go off, or sleep through it. If he sleeps throughout the day,' said he, 'he will get over it. It's a serious crisis. Such things will happen sometimes'— 'To us porters,' chimed in the old man. And so it was that we got him out of his bed; and he was very cheerful. But I

was anxious all day long, and never left him. At noon all was nearly lost when the farmer came in to speak to me. Luckily, though, the forester had locked the yard door, and so he went out and gave the farmer a hint. As soon as the latter came in, my father called out, 'What day is it, comrade?' 'Thursday,' said the farmer, 'the 14th;' at which my father's whole face broke out into a laugh, and he cried, 'Now it's certain; now I believe it.' However, he slept at the forester's that night too, that we might get the birth-day well over.

"The next day I took my father to the farm-yard, to the room next mine. I had had it hastily furnished for him. Herr von Fink, who knew all about it, sent some good stout things from the castle; I had his old Blucher hung up, let in some robin-redbreasts, and put in a joiner's bench and a few tools, that he might feel comfortable. So I said, 'This is your room, father; you must stay with me now.' 'No,' said he; 'that will never do, my manikin.' 'There is no help for it,' I replied; 'Herr von Fink will have it so, Mr. Wohlfart will have it so, Mr. Schröter will have it so; you must give way. We won't part again as long as we are on earth.' And then drew my hand out of its bandages, and gave him such a fine lecture about his unhealthy way of life, and his fancies, that he got quite soft, and said all manner of kind things to me. Next came Herr von Fink, and welcomed him in his own merry way; and in the afternoon our young lady brought the baron in. The poor blind gentleman was quite delighted with my father; he liked his voice much, felt him all over, and as he went away, called him a man after his own heart; and so he must be, for the baron has come every afternoon since to my father's little room, and listened to his sawing and hammering.

"My father is still a good deal perplexed at all he sees here, and he is not quite clear about that day he is said to have slept, though he must be up to it too, for ever since he often catches me by the head, and calls me a rascal. This word now replaces 'dwarf' and 'manikin' in his talk, although it is a still worse appellation for a bailiff. He is going to be a wheelwright, and has been cutting out spokes all day. I am only afraid he will work too hard. I rejoice to have him here, and if he once gets over the winter, he will soon walk off the weakness in his feet. He means to sell the little house, but only to a porter. He begs that you will offer it to Wilhelm, who now rents one, and say that he shall have it cheaper than a stranger."

CHAPTER XLIII.

A WEEK after the death of Hippus, Anton was sitting in his own room, writing to Fink. He was telling him that the lawyer's corpse had been taken out of the river at the wear at the end of the town, and that the cause of his death was uncertain. A child belonging to the house in which the wretched man lived had told that, on the evening of the search made by the police, Hippus had been met in the street, near his own dwelling; since then, nothing had been seen of him. Under these circumstances, suicide did not appear unlikely. However, the police were of opinion that the crushed hat afforded evidence of violence. No papers had been found at his dwelling, and a second search had been made there without results. Anton gave it as his own opinion respecting the fearful event that Itzig was in some way connected with it.

At that moment the door was opened, the Galician hastily entered the room, and, without speaking a word, laid an old pair of spectacles, set in rusty steel, on the table before Anton, who, looking at the agitated face before him, sprang from his seat.

"His spectacles," hoarsely whispered Tinkeles; "I found them close to the water. Just God! that any one should have such a fright as that!"

"Whose spectacles are they, and where did you find them?" inquired Anton, guessing at what the Galician lacked strength to tell, and looking with horror at the dim glasses before him. "Compose yourself, Tinkeles, and speak."

"It can not remain concealed—it cries to Heaven!" said Tinkeles, in great excitement. "You shall hear how it came to pass. Two days after I had spoken with you about the two hundred dollars, I went in the evening to the sleeping-room at Löbel Pinkus's. As I entered the court a man ran against me in the dark. I thought, Is that Itzig, or is it not? I said to myself, It is Itzig; that is his run when he runs in haste. When I got up into the large room, it was empty, and I sat down at the table and looked into my pocket-book; and as I sat there, the wind rose outside, and there was a knocking

in the gallery, as if some one was knocking who wanted to get in, and could not open a door. I was frightened, and put up my letters, and cried, 'If any one is there, let him say so.' No one answered, but the knocking went on all the time. Then I summoned up courage, took up the lamp, and went into the gallery, and searched every room. I could see no one. And again there was the knocking close to me, and then a great crack, and a door flew open, which had never been open before, and from the door steps led down to the water. When I put the lamp near the steps, I saw that a wet foot had come up them, and the marks of it were to be seen all the way to the room—wet spots on the floor. And I marveled, and said to myself, 'Schmeie,' said I, 'who has gone by night out of the water into the room, leaving the door open, like a spirit?' And I was afraid; and before I closed the door, I once more looked along the steps with the lamp, and then I saw something sparkle in the light close to the water, on the last step of all, and I ventured down one step after the other: woe is me, Mr. Wohlfart, it was a hard task. The wind howled, and blew my lamp about, and the staircase became as dark as a well; and that which I picked up is yonder"—pointing to the spectacles—"the glasses that he wore before his eyes."

"And how do you know that they are the dead man's spectacles?" asked Anton, in painful suspense.

"I know them by the joint, which is tied round with black worsted. I have often seen him in Pinkus's room with those spectacles on. So I hid the spectacles, and thought to myself that I would say nothing about them to Pinkus, but give them myself to Hippus, and see whether he could be of use to me in business. I carried about the glasses till to-day, expecting to see him; and when he did not come, I asked Pinkus for him, and he answered, 'I know not where he is hiding.' And to-day, at noon, as I entered the inn, Pinkus came running toward me, and said, 'Schmeie,' said he, 'if you want to speak to Hippus, you'll have to go into the water; he has been found in the water.' It went through me like a shot when he said this, and I had to hold on by the wall."

Anton went to his writing-table, dashed off a few lines to the detective, who had not long left him, rang the bell, and desired the servant to take the note in all haste.

Meanwhile Tinkeles had sunk down on a chair, and kept muttering unintelligibly.

Anton, scarcely less agitated, paced up and down the room.

At last the silence was broken by the Galician raising his voice, and inquiring, "Do not you think that the spectacles will be worth the hundred dollars you have for me in your writing-desk?"

"I don't know," curtly replied Anton, continuing to pace up and down. Schmeie relapsed into exhaustion and silence. At length he looked up again and said, "At least fifty?"

"None of your bargaining at present," replied Anton, dryly.

"Why not?" cried Tinkeles, in dudgeon. "I have had a great fright; is that to go for nothing?" And he was again absorbed in distress.

The interview was interrupted by the appearance of the detective. This experienced officer made the Galician repeat his tale, took the spectacles, ordered a coach for himself and the reluctant Tinkeles, and said to Anton as he left, "Prepare for a sudden clearing up; whether I shall carry out my purpose is still uncertain, but there is a prospect for you of finding the documents you seek."

"At what a cost!" cried Anton, shuddering.

The drawing-room in Ehrenthal's house was brilliantly lit up, and through the drawn curtain a slight glimmer fell upon the small rain that sank down like mist on the streets. Several rooms were opened; heavy silver candelabra stood about; bright tea-services, gay sets of porcelain—every thing in the house had been brushed up, washed, and displayed; the dark floor had been newly waxed; even the cook had a newly plaited cap—in short, the whole house was renovated. The fair Rosalie stood in the midst of all this splendor, in a dress of yellow silk, trimmed with purple flowers, gorgeous as a *houri* of Paradise, and, like them, prepared to receive her elect. Her mother smoothed the thick folds of her dress, looked triumphantly at her, and said, in a transport of motherly love, "How beautiful you are to-day, Rosalie, my only child!"

But Rosalie was too much accustomed to this admiration to heed it, and went on trying to fasten a bracelet on her round arm. "It was really too bad of Itzig to bring me turquoises; he ought to have known that they are out of fashion."

"They are very handsomely set," said her mother, soothingly. "The gold is massive, and the pattern quite new."

"And where is Itzig? To-day, at least, he ought to come early; the relatives will all be here before the bridegroom," said Rosalie, complainingly.

"He will be here in time," replied Itzig's patroness. "You

know how he toils and moils that you may have a brilliant establishment. You are fortunate," said she, with a sigh; "you are now entering upon life, and you will be a lady of consequence. You must go to the capital for a few weeks after your marriage, to spend the honeymoon quietly, and be introduced to my relations; and, meanwhile, I shall have this story furnished for you, and will move up stairs, and spend the rest of my life in nursing Ehrenthal."

"Will my father make his appearance to-day?" inquired Rosalie.

"He must do so on account of our relations. He must pronounce the paternal blessing upon you."

"He is sure to bring disgrace upon us, and to talk nonsense again," said the dutiful daughter.

"I have told him what he is to say," answered her mother; "and he nodded, to show that he understood me."

The bell rang, the door opened, and company appeared. The room soon filled. Ladies in gorgeous gold-embroidered silk dresses, with sparkling chains and ear-rings, occupied the large sofa and arm-chairs around. They were mostly large in figure, with here and there a pair of lustrous eyes and a set of handsome features. They looked like a gay tulip-bed out of which the gardener has rooted every sober-colored flower. Behind them stood the gentlemen, with cunning faces and hands in their pockets, altogether much less imposing and agreeable to behold. Thus all the company waited for the bridegroom, who still delayed his coming.

At length he appeared. His eyes wandered suspiciously around; his voice faltered as he accosted his betrothed. He strove to the utmost to find some polite words to say to the beautiful girl, and could almost himself have laughed savagely at the blank he felt within. He did not see her brilliant eyes, her gorgeous bust, and magnificent attire. Even when at her side he was obliged to think of something else—of that of which he was always thinking. He soon turned away from her and joined the gentlemen, who became more conversable after his arrival. A few commonplace observations, made by the younger men, were heard from time to time, such as, "Miss Rosalie looks enchantingly beautiful;" and, "I wonder whether Ehrenthal will appear;" and, "This long continuance of fog is unusual, and very unhealthy: one is obliged to wear flannel." At length some one uttered the words "four and a half per cent." There was an end of detached

remarks; a subject of conversation had been found. Itzig was one of the loudest, gesticulating on all sides. They spoke of the funds—of wool—of the failure of a money-broker who had over-speculated in paper. The ladies were forgotten; and, being quite accustomed to it on such occasions, they solemnly held their tea-cups in their hands, smoothed the folds of their dresses, and moved their throats and arms so as to make their bracelets and chains sparkle in the light.

The conversation was now interrupted by a strange sound: a door was opened, and in the midst of profound silence a heavy arm-chair was rolled into the room.

In the arm-chair sat an old, white-haired man, with a fat, swollen face, with staring eyes, bent frame, and arms supinely hanging down. It was Hirsch Ehrenthal, the imbecile. The chair being rolled into the midst of the assembly, he looked slowly round, nodded, and repeated over and over again the words he had been taught: "Good-evening—good evening." His wife now bent over him, and, raising her voice, said in his ear, "Do you know the company here assembled? They are our relatives."

"I know," nodded the figure; "it is a soiree. They all went to a great soiree, and I remained alone in my room, and I sat on his bed. Where is Bernhard, that he does not come to his old father?"

The guests who had surrounded the arm-chair now retreated in confusion; and the lady of the house again screamed in the old man's ear, "Bernhard is traveling, but your daughter Rosalie is here."

"Traveling?" mournfully inquired the old man. "How can he be traveling? I wanted to buy him a horse, that he might ride it; I wanted to buy him an estate, that he might live on it, like a respectable man, as he always was. I know," he cried, "when I last saw him, he was in bed. He lay on a bed, and he raised his clenched hand, and shook it at his father."

"Come here, Rosalie," cried her mother, distressed at these reminiscences. "When your father sees you, my child, he will have other thoughts."

Rosalie approached, and, spreading out her handkerchief, knelt down before the arm-chair. "Do you know me, father?" she cried.

"I know you," said the old man. "You are a woman. Why should a woman lie on the earth? Give me my praying-cloak, and speak the prayer. I will kneel in your place, for a

long night has come upon us. When it is past, we will kindle the lights, and will eat. It will be time to put on gay garments then. Why do you wear gay garments now, when the Lord is wroth with the congregation?" He began to murmur a prayer, and again collapsed.

Rosalie rose impatiently; and her mother said, in much embarrassment, "He is worse to-day than he has ever been. I wished your father to be present at his daughter's betrothal, but I see that he can not perform the duties of the head of the family. I have, then, in my character of mother, to make a happy announcement to the company assembled. Then solemnly taking her daughter's hand, she said, "Draw nearer, Itzig."

Hitherto Itzig had silently stood with the rest, and stared at the old man, from time to time shrugging his shoulders, and shaking his head over the melancholy spectacle, as became his position in the family. But there was another form present before his eyes: he knew better than any who it was that wailed and groaned; he knew, too, who had died and had not forgiven. Mechanically he advanced, his eyes still fixed on Ehrenthal. The guests now formed a circle around him and Rosalie, and her mother took his hand.

Then the old man in the arm-chair began again. "Hush!" said he, distinctly; "there he stands—the invisible. We go home from the burial, and he dances among the women. He will strike down all he looks upon. There he stands!" he screamed, and rose from his chair. "There! there! Throw down your water-jars and fly into the house, for he who stands there is cursed of the Lord. Cursed!" he screamed; and, clenching his hands, he tottered like a madman toward Itzig.

Itzig's face grew ghastly; he tried to laugh, but his features quivered with fear. Suddenly the door was opened, and his errand-boy looked anxiously into the room. One glance sufficed to tell Itzig all that the youth had to say. He was discovered—he was in danger. He sprang to the door and disappeared.

Lay aside your bridal attire, fair Rosalie; throw off the turquoise bracelet. For you there is no betrothal—no marriage feast. Soon you will leave the town with drooping head, glad, by flying among strangers, to escape the mockery of cruel hearts at home. The gold that your father heaped up for his children by usury and fraud will again roll from hand to hand, will serve good and bad alike, will swell the mighty tide of

wealth by which human life is sustained and adorned, peoples and states made great and powerful, and individuals strong or weak, each according to his work.

Without, the night was dark, small rain was falling, and the air was chill. Itzig rushed down the steps. A trembling voice called out after him, "The police are in the house; they are breaking open the room-door." He heard no more; a horrible dread filled his soul. Thought after thought passed through his brain with delirious rapidity. He felt his pocket, in which he had for the last week kept a large sum of money. It was not the hour of departure of any train that would take him to the sea, and at all the stations he would be watched for. He ran along through narrow streets in remote parts of the town, turning back whenever he got near a lamp, his pace increasingly rapid, his thoughts increasingly confused. At last his strength failed him, and he cowered down in a corner to collect himself. But soon he heard a watchman's hollow horn sound near him. Here, too, was danger. Again he rushed onward to the one and only place that stood out clearly defined in his thoughts—the place he shuddered at, yet turned to as a last refuge. As he neared the inn he saw a dark shadow at the door. The little lawyer had often stood there in the dark, waiting for Veitel's return. Was he standing there now and waiting? The wretched fugitive started back, then approached—the door was free; he stepped in, but the shadow rose again behind him and stood at the door. Veitel took off his boots and crept up stairs, groped in the dark for a room door, opened it with trembling hand, and took down a bunch of keys from the wall, with which he hurried to the gallery, hearing, as if at a great distance, the long-drawn breath of sleeping men. He stood at the door of the staircase; a violent shudder convulsed him as he went down step after step When he first put his foot into the water he heard a lamentable groan. He clung to the banisters as that other had done, and looked down. Again there was a groan, and he now found out it was only his own breathing. He felt the depth of the water with his foot. It had risen since that time—it was higher than his knee, but he found a footing and stood safely in the stream.

The night was dark, the rain still came down, the mist hung thick over the houses—a gable, a paling peeping out here and there; the water rushed along, the only sound to break the silence of the night, and in this man's ear it roared

like thunder. He felt all the torments of the lost while wading on and groping for his way. He had to cling to the slippery palings in order not to sink. He reached the staircase of the next house, felt in his pockets for the key—one swing round the corner, and his foot would be on the lowest step. Just as he was about to turn he started back, his raised foot fell into the water; he saw a dark stooping figure on the staircase. There it sat motionless. He knew the outline of the old hat; dark as it was, he could see the ugly features of the well-known face. He wiped his eyes, he waved his hands to dispel it; it was no illusion; the spectre sat there a few steps off. At length the horrible thing stretched out a hand toward him. The murderer started back, his foot slipped off the platform, he fell up to his neck in water. There he stood in the stream, the wind howling over him, the water rushing ever louder and louder. He raised his hands, his eyes still fixed upon the vision. Slowly it rose from its seat—it moved along the platform—it stretched out its hand. He sprang back horror-stricken into the stream—a fall, a loud scream, the short drowning struggle, and all was over. The stream rolled on, and carried the corpse away.

There was a stir along the river's edge; torches flared, arms glistened, loud shouts were heard, and from the foot of the steps a man waded into the water and exclaimed, "He was gone before I could reach him. To-morrow we shall find him at the wear."

CHAPTER XLIV.

The tavern of Löbel Pinkus was thoroughly searched, the secret stores in the next house brought to light, and several stolen goods of new and old date being therein found, the tavern-keeper himself was sent to prison. Among the things thus discovered was the baron's empty casket, and, in the secret door of a locked-up press, the missing notes of hand, and both the deeds of mortgage. In Itzig's house a document was found, by which Pinkus declared Veitel possessor of the first mortgage of twenty thousand. Pinkus's obdurate nature being a good deal softened by the search, he confessed what he had no longer any interest in denying, that he had been commissioned by Veitel to pay the money to the baron, and that the sum only amounted to about ten thousand dollars;

so the baron recovered his claim to the half of the first mortgage. Pinkus was sentenced to long imprisonment. The mysterious tavern was given up; and Tinkeles, who had, immediately upon Veitel's death, demanded his second hundred dollars from Anton, carried his bundle and his caftan to another retreat. His friendly feelings for the firm of T. O. Schröter had been so quickened by the late occurrences, that they had to be on their guard, and to decline some weighty commercial transactions on which he was most anxious that they should enter with him. The natural consequence of their shyness was to impress Tinkeles with their wisdom, and he continued to frequent the counting-house, without, by any further audacious speculations, hazarding its favor. Pinkus's house was sold to a worthy dyer, and blue and black wool were seen hanging down from the gallery over which Veitel's haggard form had so often leaned.

After long discussions with the attorney and the humbled Ehrenthals, Anton received the notes of hand and the last mortgage in return for payment of twenty thousand dollars.

Meanwhile the sale of the family property came on. A purchaser sought out Anton even before the term, and arrangements were made which more than insured the covering of all mortgages.

The day after the term Anton wrote to the baroness, inclosing the baron's notes of hand. He sealed up the letter with the cheerful feeling that out of all the wreck and ruin he had saved for Lenore a dowry of about thirty thousand dollars.

The white snow again lay heavy on the Polish castle, and the crows left the print of their feet on its roof. Winter's holiday robes were spread over wood and field, the earth was hushed in deepest slumber, no sheep-dog barked in the meadows, the farming implements were all laid by, and yet there was life and animation on the estate, and workmen were busy in the second story with foot-rule and saw. The ground was uneven in the farm-yard, for the foundation of a new building had been dug; and in the rooms around, and even out in the sunshine, workmen from the town—joiners, wheelwrights, and cabinet-makers—were busily employed. They whistled cheerily at their work, and the yellow shavings flew far and wide. New energies, in short, are visible in all directions, and when spring comes, a colony of laborers will spread over the country, and force the long-dormant soil to yield the fruits of industry.

Father Sturm sat in his warm room, hammering away.

Opposite him, in the only cushioned chair, reclined the blind baron, staff in hand, listening intently.

"You must be tired, Sturm," said the baron.

"Nay," cried the giant, "my hands are as strong as ever, and this is only a small barrel for rain-water—mere child's work."

"He once hid in a little barrel," said the baron to himself. "He was a delicate child. His nurse had put him in to bathe him, and he had bent his back and knees in such a way that he could not get out. I was obliged to have the hoops knocked off to extricate my boy from his prison."

The giant cleared his throat. "Were they iron hoops?" he asked, sympathizingly.

"It was my son," said the baron, his features quivering.

"Yes," whispered Sturm, "he was stately; he was a handsome man; it was a pleasure to hear his sword rattle, and to see how he twisted his little beard." Alas! how often he had said this before to the blind father.

"It was the will of Heaven!" said the baron, folding his hands.

"It was," repeated old Sturm. "Our Lord God chose to take him when at his best. That was an honor; and no man could leave the world more beautifully. It was for his parents and his fatherland that he put on his coat with epaulettes, and he was victorious, and driving those Poles before him, when the Lord called out his name and enrolled him in his own guard."

"But I must remain behind," said the baron.

"And I rejoice that I, too, have seen our young master," continued Sturm, more fluently; "for you know that he was our young master then. You trusted my Karl with the whole management of the farm, and so it was an honor for me to be able to show that I trusted your son."

"It was wrong of him to borrow money from you," said the baron, shaking his head. And this he said, because he had often heard old Sturm's comforting reply, and longed to hear it again.

The giant laid his tool aside, ran his hand through his hair, and tried to look very bold as he began, in a light-hearted tone, "Do you know, sir, that one must make allowance for a young gentleman? Youth will be wild. Many have to borrow money in their young days, particularly when they wear

such a beautiful coat, with silver fringe upon it. We were no niggards either, baron," he continued, deprecatingly, gently tapping the blind man's knee with his tool. "And the young officer was very polite, and I believe that he was somewhat bashful. And when I gave him the money, I could see how sorry he was to want it. I gave it him all the more readily. Then, when I helped him into the drosky, and he leaned out of the carriage, I can assure you he was much moved, and reached out both of his little hands to clasp my fist, and shake it once more. And while he was sitting there, the light fell on his face—a sweet, kind face it was, something like yours, and still more like the baroness, as far as I have been able to see her."

The blind man, too, stretched out his hands to grasp the porter's fist. Sturm pushed his bench forward, took the baron's hands in his right one, and stroked them with his left. Both sat silent, side by side.

At last the baron began with broken voice to say, "You were the last who showed kindness to my Eugene. I thank you for it from my inmost heart. An unfortunate, broken-down man thanks you. So long as I live I shall implore the blessing of the Most High on your head. My son will never support my feeble footsteps in my old age, but Heaven has preserved a good son to you. All the blessings that I wished for my poor Eugene, I now pray to God may be the portion of your Karl."

Sturm wiped his eyes, and then clasped the baron's hands again. The two fathers sat together in silence, till, with a sigh, the baron rose. Sturm carefully took his arm, and led him through yard and meadow to the castle terrace; for there is a road now up to the tower—a road with a stone parapet, and the door can be reached by carriages and on foot. Sturm rings the bell, the baron's valet hurries down, and leads his master up the steps, for Father Sturm still finds a staircase hard work.

Meanwhile a carriage stops in the farm-yard. Karl respectfully hurries from his room, and the new proprietor jumps down.

"Good-day, sergeant," cried Fink; "how goes it in the castle and on the farm? How are the Fräulein and the baroness?"

"All right," reported Karl, "only the baroness is very feeble. We have been expecting you for a week past. The

family have been daily asking whether there were any tidings of you."

"I was detained," said Fink; "and perhaps I should not be back now, but that, since this fall of snow, there is no judging of land. I have bought Dobrowitz."

"Zounds!" cried Karl, in delight.

"Capital ground," continued Fink; "five hundred acres of wood, in which the manure lies nearly a foot deep. In the Polish hole close by, which they call a town, the Jews thronged like ants when they heard that henceforth our spurs would jingle daily over their market-place. I say, bailiff, you will be delighted when you see the new property. I have a great mind to send you over there next spring. But what have you there—a letter from Anton? Let's have it." He hastily tore it open. "Is the Fräulein in the castle?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink."

"Very well. A messenger goes this evening to Neudorf;" and with rapid step he hurried into the house.

Lenore sat in her room sewing, with a good deal of cut-out linen round her. She diligently passed her needle through the stiff cloth, sometimes stretching the seam on her knee, smoothing it with her thimble, and looking doubtfully to see whether each individual stitch was small and even. Then that rapid footstep was heard in the passage, and springing up, she convulsively pressed her work together. But she composed herself by a mighty effort, and sat down again to her task. He knocked at her door. A deep blush spread slowly over her face, and her "Come in" hardly reached her guest's ear. As Fink entered, he glanced with some curiosity around the plainly-furnished room, which had a few chalk drawings by Lenore on the walls, but nothing else except absolutely necessary furniture. Even the little panther-skin sofa was gone.

When Fink bowed before her, she inquired in a tone of indifference, "Have you been detained by any thing unpleasant? We were all uneasy about you."

"A property that I have bought interfered with my return. I come now in all haste to report myself to my mistress, and, at the same time, I bring a packet which Anton has sent for the baroness. If she feels sufficiently well to see me, will you prepare her to do so?"

Lenore took the letter. "I will go immediately to my mother; pray excuse me;" and, slightly bending, she tried to pass him.

Fink waved her back, and said jokingly, "I find you most housewifely busy with needle and scissors. Who is the happy one for whom you are sewing those wedge-shaped pieces together?"

Lenore blushed again. "Gentlemen must not inquire into the mysteries of feminine work," said she.

"I know, however, that the thimble did not usually stand high in your favor," said Fink, good-humoredly. "Is it necessary, dear lady, that you should ruin your eyes?"

"Yes, Herr von Fink," returned Lenore, firmly, "it is, and it will be necessary."

"Oh ho!" cried Fink, shaking his head, and comfortably leaning against the back of a chair. "Do you suppose, then, that I have not long ago remarked your secret campaigns with needle and scissors, and also your grave face, and the magnificent bearing you assume toward me, naughty boy that I am? Where is the panther-sofa? Where is the brotherly frankness that I have a right to expect after our understanding? You have kept very imperfectly to our agreement. I see plainly that my good friend is inclined to give me up, and withdraw with the best grace possible; but permit me to remark that this will hardly avail you. You will not get rid of me."

"Be generous, Herr von Fink," cried Lenore, in extreme excitement. "Do not make what I have to do still harder. Yes, I am preparing to part from this place—to part from you."

"You refuse, then, to remain with me?" said Fink, with a frowning brow. "Very well; I shall return, and implore till I am heard. If you run away, I shall run after you; and if you cut off your beautiful hair and fly to a convent, I'll leap the walls and fetch you out. Have I not wooed you as the adventurer in the fairy tales does the king's daughter? To win you, proud Lenore, I have turned sand into grass, and transformed myself into a respectable farmer. Therefore, beloved mistress, be reasonable, and do not torment me by maidenly caprices."

"Oh, respect such caprices," cried Lenore, bursting into tears. "In the solitude of these last weeks I have wrestled hourly with my sorrow. I am a poor girl, whose duty it is to live for her afflicted parent. The dower that I should bring you would be sickness, gloom, and poverty."

"You are mistaken," replied Fink, earnestly. "Our friend has provided for you. He has hunted two rascals into the

water, and has paid your father's debts. The baron has a nice little fortune remaining; and I can tell your perverse ladyship you are no bad match after all, if you lay any stress upon that. The letter you hold upsets all your philosophy."

Lenore looked at the envelope and threw the letter away.

"No," cried she, beside herself. "When, shattered by sorrow, I lay upon your breast, you then told me I was to get stronger; and every day I feel that, when I come into contact with you, I have no strength, no opinion, no will of my own. Whatever you say appears to me right, and I forget how I thought before. What you require I must needs do, unresisting as a slave. The woman who goes through life at your side should be your equal in intellect and power, and should feel reliant in her own province; but I am an uncultivated, helpless girl. In my foolish love I let it appear that I could do for your sake what no woman should. You find nothing in me to respect. You would kiss me and—endure me." Lenore's hand clenched, and her eyes flashed as she spoke.

"Does it then repent you so much that for my sake you sent a bullet into that villain's shoulder?" said Fink. "What I now see looks less like love than hatred."

"I hate you?" cried the poor girl, hiding her face with her hands.

He took her hands, drew her to him, and pressed a kiss upon her lips. "Trust me, Lenore."

"Leave me! leave me!" cried Lenore, struggling; but her lips were pressed to his, and her arms twined around him; and, looking into his face with a passionate expression of love and fear, she gradually sank down at his feet.

Thoroughly moved, Fink stooped and raised her. "Mine you are, and I hold you fast," cried he. "With rifle and bullet I have bought your stormy heart. In the same breath you tell me sweet things and bitter. What, then, am I such a despot that a noble-minded woman should fear to come under my yoke? Just as you are, Lenore—resolute, bold, a little passionate devil—just so will I have you remain. We have been companions in arms, and so we shall continue to be. The day may return when we shall both raise our guns to our cheeks, and the people about us need natures more disposed to give than to take a blow. Were you not my heart's desire, were you a man, I should like to have you for my life's companion; so, Lenore, you will be to me not only a beloved wife, but a courageous friend, the confidante of all my plans, my best and truest comrade."

Lenore shook her head, but she clung to him firmly. "I ought to be your housewife," sighed she.

Fink caressingly stroked back her hair and kissed her burning brow. "Be content, sweetheart," said he, tenderly, "and make up your mind to it. We have been together in a fire strong enough to bring love to maturity, and we know each other thoroughly. Between ourselves, we shall have many a storm in our house. I am no easy-going companion, at least for a woman, and you will very soon find that will of yours again, the loss of which you are now lamenting. Be at rest, darling, you shall be as headstrong as of yore; you need not distress yourself on that account; so you may prepare for a few storms, but for hearty love and a merry life as well. I will have you laugh again, Lenore. You will have no need to make my shirts, and, if you don't like account-keeping, why, let it alone; and if you do sometimes give your boys a box on the ear, it will do our brood no harm. I think you will give yourself to me."

Lenore was silent, but she clung closer to his breast. Fink drew her away. "Come to our mother!" cried he.

Both bent over the bed of the invalid. A brightness passed over the pale face of the baroness as she laid her hands on Fink's head and gave him her blessing.

"She is still a child," said she. "It remains with you, my son, to make a good woman of her."

She sent her children out of the room. "Go to your father; bring him to me, and leave us alone together."

When the baron sat by the side of his wife, she drew his hand to her lips and whispered, "Let me thank you, Oscar, to-day, for many years of happiness—for all your love."

"Poor wife!" murmured the blind man.

"What you have done and suffered," continued the baroness, "you have done and suffered for me and my son, and we both leave you behind in a joyless world. You were not to have the happiness of transferring an inheritance; you are the last to bear the name of Rothsattel."

The baron groaned.

"But the reputation we leave behind will be spotless as was your whole life till two hours of despair." She placed the bundle of notes of hand in the blind man's grasp; then, having torn each one up, she rang the bell, and told the servant to put them piece by piece into the stove. The flames leaped up and threw a red light over the room till the last was con-

sumed. The evening closed in, and the baron lay on the sick lady's bed, and hid his face in the pillows, while she held her hands folded over him, and her lips moved in prayer.

In the early morning light the ravens and jackdaws fluttered over the snowy roof; their black wings hovered a while above the tower; then, with loud cries, they broke away to the wood, to announce to their feathered race that the castle walls contained a bride and a corpse. The pale lady from a foreign land has died in the night, and the blind man who is lying in his daughter's arms has but one consolation, that of knowing that he shall soon follow her to her endless rest. And the ill-omened birds scream out to the winds that the old Slavonic curse has fallen on the castle, and the doom has lighted on the foreign settlers too.

But little cares the man who now holds sway within the castle walls whether a raven croak or a lark sing, and if a curse lie on his property, he will laughingly blow it away. His life will be a ceaseless and successful conflict with the dark influences around, and from the Slavonic castle will come out a band of noble boys, and a new German race, strong and enduring in mind and body, will overspread the land—a race of colonists and conquerors.

In a few cordial lines Fink announced to his friend his own betrothal and the death of the baroness. A sealed note to Sabine was inclosed in the envelope.

It was evening when the postman brought the letter to Anton's room. Long did he sit pondering its contents; at length he took up the note to Sabine, and hurried to the front part of the house.

He found the merchant in his study, and gave him the letter.

The merchant immediately called in Sabine. "Fink is betrothed; here is his announcement."

Sabine clasped her hands in delight, and was hurrying off to Anton, but she stopped with a blush, took her note to the lamp, and opened it. There could not have been much in it, for she read it in an instant, and, though she tried hard to look grave, could not suppress a smile. At another time Anton would have watched her mood with passionate interest; to-day he scarcely heeded it.

"You will spend the evening with us, dear Wohlfart?" said the merchant.

Anton replied, "I was going to ask you to spare me a few moments. I have something to say to you." He looked uneasily at Sabine.

"Let her hear it. Remain, Sabine," said the merchant to his sister, who was just going to slip away; "you are good friends; Mr. Wohlfart will not object to your presence. Speak, my friend; what can I do for you?"

Anton bit his lips and looked again at the beloved form that leaned with downcast eyes against the door. "May I inquire, Mr. Schröter," he at length began, "whether you have found the situation for which you kindly promised to look out?"

Sabine moved uneasily, and the merchant looked up in amazement. "I believe I shall soon have something to offer you; but is there any great hurry about it, dear Wohlfart?"

"There is," replied Anton, gravely. "I have not a day to lose. My relations to the Rothsattel family are now entirely closed, and the fearful events with which I have been connected during the last weeks have affected my health. I yearn for repose. Regular employment in some foreign city, where nothing will remind me of the past, is, however, positively essential to me."

Again Sabine moved, but a look from her brother kept her back.

"And could you not find that repose which I too wish for you here with us?" inquired the merchant.

"No," replied Anton, in a faint voice; "I beg you not to be offended if I leave you to-day."

"Leave us!" cried the merchant. "I see no reason for such haste. You can recruit here; the ladies must take better care of you than hitherto. Wohlfart complains of you, Sabine. He looks pale and worn. You and our cousin must not allow that."

Sabine did not answer a word.

"I must go, Mr. Schröter," said Anton, decidedly. "To-morrow I set out."

"And will you not at least tell your friends the reason of so hasty a departure?" said the merchant, gravely.

"You know the reason. I have done with my past. Hitherto I have ill provided for my future; for I am about to seek and win, in some subordinate situation, the confidence and good opinion of strangers. I have become, too, very poor in friends. I must separate for years from all I love. I have

some cause to feel alone, and since I must needs begin life again, it is best to do so as soon as possible, for every day that I spend here is fruitless, and only makes my strength less, the necessary parting harder." He spoke in deep emotion, his voice trembling, but he did not lose his self-control. Then going up to Sabine, he took her hand. "In this last hour I tell you, in the presence of your brother, what it can not offend you to hear, for you have known it long. Parting from you pains me more than I can say. Farewell!" And now he fairly broke down, and turned to the window.

After a pause the merchant said, "Your sudden departure, dear Wohlfart, will be inconvenient to my sister as well as to me. Sabine was anxious to request such a service from you as a merchant's sister is likely to require. I, too, wish very much that you should not refuse her. Sabine begs that you will look over some papers for her. It will be no great task."

Anton turned, and made a deprecating gesture.

"Before you decide, listen to a fact that you have probably not known before," continued the merchant. "Ever since my father's death, Sabine has secretly been my partner, and her advice and opinion has decided matters in our counting-house oftener than you think. She, too, has been your principal, dear Wohlfart." He made a sign to his sister, and left the room.

Anton looked in amazement at the principal in white muslin, with black braided hair. For years, then, he had served and obeyed the youthful figure which now blushingly approached him.

"Yes, Wohlfart," said Sabine, timidly, "I, too, have had a small hold upon your life. And how proud I was of it! Even those Christmas-boxes you used to receive, I knew of them; and it was my sugar and coffee that the little Anton drank. When your worthy father came to us and asked for a situation for you, it was I who persuaded my brother to take you; for Traugott asked me about it, he himself objecting, and thinking you were too old. But I begged for you, and from that time my brother always called you my apprentice. It was I who promised your father to take care of you here. I was but an inexperienced child myself, and the confidence of a stranger enchanted me. Your father, good old gentleman, would not wear, while with us, the velvet cap that peeped out of his pocket, till I drew it out and put it on his white curls; and then I wondered whether my apprentice would have such beau-

tiful curls too. And when you came, and all were pleased with you, and my brother pronounced you the best of all his clerks, I was as proud of you as your good father could have been."

Anton leaned on the desk, and hid his face with his hands.

"And that day when Fink insulted you, and again after that boating excursion, I was angry with him, not only for his presumption, but because he had taken my true apprentice into danger; and because I always felt that you belonged a little to me, I begged my brother to take you with him on that dangerous journey. It was for me, too, Wohlfart, that you toiled in that foreign land; and when you stood by the loaded wagons, amid fire and clash of arms that fearful night, they were my goods that you were saving; and so, my friend, I come to you now in the character of a merchant, and pray you to do me a service. You shall look over an account for me."

"I will," said Anton, turning away, "but not at this moment."

Sabine went to a book-case, and laid out two books, with gilt leaves and green morocco binding, on the desk. Then taking Anton by the hand, she said, in a trembling voice, "Please come and look at my Debit and Credit." She opened the first volume. Beneath all manner of skillful flourishes stood the words, "With God—Private Ledger of T. O. Schröter."

Anton started back. "It is the private book of the firm," cried he. "This is a mistake."

"It is no mistake," said Sabine. "I want you to look over it."

"Impossible!" cried Anton. "Neither you nor your brother can seriously wish this. God forbid that any one should venture to do so but the heads of the concern. So long as a firm lasts, these pages are for no human eyes but those of its head, and after that of the next heir. He who reads this book knows what no stranger should—nay, as far as this book goes, the most intimate friend is a stranger. Neither as merchant nor as upright man can I comply with your wish."

Sabine held his hand fast. "But do look at it, Wohlfart; look at least at its title." She pointed out its cover. "Here you have T. O. Schröter." Then turning over the pages, "There are few empty columns here; the book ends with the last year." Then opening the second volume, she said, "This book is empty, but here we find another firm; look at least at its title."

Anton read, "With God—Private Ledger of T. O. Schröter and Company."

Sabine pressed his hand, and said gently, and as with entreaty, "And you are to be the new partner, my friend."

Anton stood motionless; but his heart beat wildly, and his face flushed up brightly. Sabine still held his hand. He saw her face near his, and, light as a breath, her lips touched his. He flung his arms around her, and the two happy lovers were clasped in speechless embrace.

The door opened, and the merchant appeared. "Hold fast the runaway!" cried he. "Yes, Anton, I have wished this for years. Since that time when you knelt by my bed and bound up my wound in a foreign land, I have cherished the hope of uniting you forever to our life. When you left us, I was angry at seeing my hope baffled. Now then, enthusiast, we have you safe—safe in our private book and in our arms." He drew the lovers to him.

"You have chosen a poor partner," cried Anton, on his new brother's breast.

"Not so, my brother. Sabine has shown herself a judicious merchant. Neither wealth nor position have any value for the individual or the community without the healthy energy which keeps the dead metal in life-producing action. You bring into the business the courage of youth and the wisdom of experience. Welcome to our house and to our hearts!"

Radiant with joy, Sabine held both the hands of her betrothed: "I have been hardly able to bear seeing you so silent and so sad. Every day when you rose from the dinner-table I used to feel that I must fly after you, and tell you before that you belonged to us. You blind one, you never found out what was passing within me, and Lenore's betrothed has known it all!"

"He!" exclaimed Anton. "I never spoke of you to him."

"Look here!" cried Sabine, taking Fink's note from her pocket. There was nothing in it but the words, "Hearty friendship, best wishes, Mrs. Sister-in-law."

Again Anton caught his beloved in his arms.

Deck thyself out, old house! rejoice, discreet cousin! dance, ye friendly house-sprites on the shadowy floor! The poetic dreams that the boy Anton nursed in his early home, beneath the prayers for blessings of his worthy parents, were honorable dreams, and here is their fulfillment. That which allured and

unsettled, and diverted him from his life-purpose, he has with manly heart overcome.

The old diary of his life is at an end, and henceforth, ye gracious house-sprites, in your private book will be inscribed, "With God, his future career of Debit and Credit."

THE END.

Books-Book
arc
4 45328 00000 2
Books-Yellow -12 208-100330
$2.99